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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

RUSSELL, FREUD, ROLLAND AND THE FIRST WORLD WAR

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1971

ABSTRACT

This thesis is an attempt to survey several aspects of pacifist thought common to three thinkers opposed to the First World War. Their efforts to explain the conflict were dominated by the possible relationship of war to the structure of the modern state, to the nature of man, and to the role of intellectuals in society. To Bertrand Russell, Sigmund Freud, and Romain Rolland the war was a social and economic disease as well as a political one, the causes of which emanated from the very fabric of the European tradition. In this context the discussion here is not a wartime biography of these men, but rather a juxtaposition of their wartime views.

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The community spirit at present is only a manifestation of the herd instinct. Men fly into each other's arms because they are afraid of each other - the owners are for themselves, the workers for themselves, the scholars for themselves! And why are they afraid? You are only afraid if you are not in harmony with yourself. People are afraid because they have never owned up to themselves. A whole society composed of men afraid of the unknown within them! They all sense that the rules they live by are no longer valid, that they live according to archaic laws - neither their religion nor their morality is in any way suited to the needs of the present. For a hundred years or more Europe has done nothing but study and build factories! They know exactly how many ounces of powder it takes to kill a man but they don't know how to pray to God, they don't even know how to be happy for a single contented hour. Just look at a student dive! Or a resort where the rich congregate. Its hopeless. Dear Sinclair, nothing good can come out of all this. These people who huddle together in fear are filled with dread and malice, no one trusts the other. They hanker after ideals that are ideals no longer but they will hound to death the man who sets up a new one. I can feel the approaching conflict. Its coming, believe me, and soon. Of course it will not 'improve' the world. Whether the workers kill the manufacturers or whether Germany makes war on Russia will merely mean a change of ownership. But it won't have entirely been in vain. It will reveal the bankruptcy of present-day ideals, there will be a sweeping away of Stone Age gods. The world as it is now, wants to die, wants to perish - and it will.

Demian, speaking in 1914.

Herman Hesse, Demian (1919), trans. by M. Roloff and M. Lebeck (New York: Harper and Row, 1925), pp. 140-141.

INTRODUCTION

When World War I broke out in August 1914 few people were aware of the fact that this war would be different from anything Europe had previously experienced. Even during the war one finds little evidence that the general staffs or, as onlookers, the intellectuals realized the extent to which warfare as such had changed or that war had achieved a new dimension. This was, after all, not a war of the traditional sort, not a cabinet war for which the respective governments had to bear responsibility alone. For what distinguished World War I from previous European wars was its total character. War aims on both sides indicated that the conflict could end only in total victory - and total defeat. It was a war of peoples and the full resources of men and materiel of each nation were thrown out to defeat the enemy. The emotions deliberately incited by press and governments were not easy to calm after the struggle had concluded and it was difficult for Europe to recover its self-confidence at the conclusion of this ruthless internecine conflict. The guilt complex on the one hand and the bad conscience on the other still find expression in histories of the period. The long-term effects of World War I are difficult to assess. Bertrand Russell, for one, described the subsequent profound trials of European civilization as "evils [that] have sprung with the inevitability of Greek Tragedy from the First World War."[1]

The three figures included in this study all expressed themselves at some length on the problem of World War I and each of them

saw it as the logical outcome of deep-seated factors in the nature of man or the organization of society. That is, World War I was more than just an accident of diplomacy. Russell's, Freud's and Rolland's writings were pervaded with an urgency that reflected their perceptions of a new dimension to war. Widespread pacifism emerged from the lengthy horror of the First World War - it is a modern phenomenon. The growth of pacifism led to immediate speculations as to the general and less apparent causes of war and Russell, Freud and Rolland were among Europe's most prominent commentators.

Bertrand Russell was still unfamiliar with psychoanalysis in 1914 but his respect for the power of the irrational in the nature of man tempered his idealism in comparison to someone like Romain Rolland, and contributed to Russell's well-balanced approach to wartime issues. He saw violence and the need for action as inherent in man but he asserted that, without the stimulation of existing environmental factors, the mass enthusiasm for the war would not have developed. Unlike Rolland he did not suggest that the masses had been hoodwinked into war but, unlike Sigmund Freud, he looked outside man to the social environment for the real causes of the struggle. The rescue of civilization was the very basis of Russell's opposition to the war as it was of Rolland's, and he was determined to locate the causes of the conflict in manageable factors subject to change or elimination.

Bertrand Russell was born in 1872. His grandfather piloted the Reform Bill of 1832 through the British Parliament; his mother and father were social crusaders for causes like women's rights and birth control; his godfather was John Stuart Mill. Although most of his work before 1914 concerned mathematics and the philosophy of logic, Russell too was

was interested in social reform. In 1896, after graduation from Cambridge, he delivered a series of lectures on the Social Democratic Party of Germany at the London School of Economics. In 1907 he stood unsuccessfully for Parliament on a platform of women's suffrage. In 1910 he lost the Liberal nomination and took a position as lecturer of mathematics at Cambridge where he was still employed at the outbreak of World War I. He died in 1970.

Sigmund Freud, in searching for an explanation to the war, maintained his "scientific" stance and looked to the inward nature of man where he believed the basic springs of human action to lie. His descriptions of these innate characteristics in terms of primal instincts, repression etc. are well known, and they led to a certain fatalism in psychoanalysis' conclusions about man and war. Freud viewed the particular organizational structure of society with disinterest during this period for, whatever its form, the fundamental qualities of human actions would remain unchanged. The war, he thought, must be explained in terms of the individual. Attacks by pacifists on the state, on capitalism, or even against the evident betrayal of the intellectuals appeared to Freud as misdirected attempts to explain the war. He viewed the potential for peace in social revolution with abiding scepticism.

Sigmund Freud was born in Moravia in 1856 and died in 1939 in London. When he was a boy his family moved to Vienna where Frued was raised and educated. In 1881 he qualified as a doctor of medicine and spent five subsequent years in physiological research and practical hospital work. His researches then concentrated on neuropathology which led him eventually to the conclusion that pathological behaviour resulted from more than purely physiological causes. In 1899, with The

Interpretation of Dreams, Freud laid the foundation of psychoanalysis, following with numerous further works among the most notable of which were The Psychopathology of Everyday Life (1904), and Totem and Taboo (1912). In the years immediately preceeding the war the psychoanalytic movement was split from within by the defection of Alfred Adler, Wilhelm Stekel and C.G. Jung, and attacked from without by a society that looked upon Freud with shocked and haughty suspicion. In 1914 Freud was in Vienna pursuing the painstaking task of building his new science.

To Romain Rolland the peoples were fighting because they had been led to fight by groups of intellectuals, bureaucrats and capitalists. He lauded the generosity with which the masses placed themselves at the disposal of their masters while he denounced the elites for calling upon such admirable qualities for the realization of such ignoble ends. When wartime realities finally became too trying for him, Rolland withdrew from his position of controversy and retired for a year to the consideration of "eternal art." Then he turned, almost with desperation, to the Russian Revolution as the potential saviour of mankind. To protect the image of the international man which had been so obscured by the war and deserted by most of his fellow intellectuals, Rolland created a religion of "l'esprit libre" and made of himself its Pope. The ideals of his religion were generous; if there was nevertheless a problem with Rolland, it was largely a matter of style. Religious crusades rarely result in the true glorification of gods. But Rolland came to represent many of Europe's disaffected intellectuals who crowded for shelter around his banner of the independence of the mind, a shelter, it might be added, that Freud regarded with enduring cynicism.

Romain Rolland was a well-established literary figure in Europe

when the war broke out in 1914. In 1913 he had received the grand prize for literature of the Academie francaise in recognition of his already impressive list of works including the Life of Beethoven, Life of Tolstoy, Musicians of Today and, his major multi-volumed novel, Jean Christophe. Rolland's education both formally and at home was steeped in humanities, beginning in Clamency where he was born in 1866. In 1880 his family moved to Paris where he attended high school and the Ecole Normale Superièure, concentrating his studies in history. In 1895 he achieved his Doctor of Letters and until 1912 he taught courses in the history of art at the Sorbonne. He was an accomplished musician and music critic. He died in 1944 at Vézelay, France.

FOOTNOTES FOR INTRODUCTION

[1]Bertrand Russell, Portraits from Memory (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1962), p.6

CHAPTER I

INITIAL REACTIONS TO THE WAR

On the evening of August 4, 1914, Bertrand Russell walked through the streets of London towards Trafalgar Square where the cheering crowds showed their delight at the prospect of war. For Russell, however, it was already a night of defeat. During the previous weeks he had circulated a petition at Cambridge aimed against British military involvement in the crisis on the Continent. In Russell's opinion, no perceivable issues justified a European war and no national interests justified British involvement should a war break out. Britain should remain neutral.

However, on the morning of August 4, the first units of the German army crossed the Belgian frontier. The dramatic story of King Albert's stubborn defense of neutrality spread throughout the world. In Britain indignation supplanted rational considerations of material interest in the public mind and Bertrand Russell was hurriedly deserted by his erstwhile anti-war friends. They were, he writes, "swept off their feet by Belgium."[1] Although Russell too was outraged, he had long expected that Belgium would be invaded in the event of war and, in reference to his former allies, he had "not supposed important publicists so frivolous as to be ignorant of this vital matter."[2] To have been opposed to British involvement before August 4 indicated, in Russell's view, that one was prepared to accept the invasion of Belgium as a likely

attendant of war between France and Germany. Russell charged those who quickly changed from pacifists to enthusiasts because of Belgium with "either having been thoughtless in the past, or being hysterical now."[3] Russell rejected moralistic interpretations of particular issues from the outset and subsequently found himself relatively alone in opposition to a war that had become for most people a matter of honour.

In the first place Russell assessed responsibility for British military involvement as a failure of diplomacy. The symbolic criteria of prestige and power had assumed such grotesque proportions that a limited political crisis had led to a general war when, in Russell's opinion, all national interests demanded peace. In an aggressive letter to the Nation Russell placed the lion's share of responsibility for British participation on the Foreign Office:

> ...all this madness, all this rage, all this flaming death of our civilization and our hopes, has been brought about because a set of official gentlemen, living luxurious lives, mostly stupid, and all without imagination or heart, has chosen that it should occur rather that any one of them should suffer some infintesimal rebuff to his country's pride.[4]

A diplomatic crisis had assumed a life of its own and the diplomats had been "hurried on at last by blind fear to loose the armies for the work of mutual butchery."[5] In Russell's view, rational interests had been ignored or grossly misinterpreted. He was so outraged at the inept diplomatic bungling of Sir Edward Grey that he felt he would be "unable to refrain from murder" should he encounter him.[6]

Russell regarded with horror that inept diplomacy could lead to a war of such proportions but he found he could not restrict his assessment of responsibility to the Foreign Office. For where he had imagined what most pacifists contended, "that wars were forced upon a reluctant

population by despotic and Machievellian governments,"[7] he saw immediately that most people greeted the war with joy. Russell was shocked to see on the faces of the people assembled in Trafalgar Square that the "anticipation of carnage was delightful to something like ninety percent of the population."[8] Consequently his attack in the Nation grew to encompass more than a guilty leadership:

> Those who saw the London crowds, during the nights leading up to the Declaration of War saw a whole population, hitherto peaceable and humane, precipitated in a few days down the steep slope to primitive barbarism, letting loose, in a moment, the instincts of hatred and blood lust against which the whole fabric of society has been raised.[9]

The widespread enthusiasm for conflict led Russell to realize that the war resulted not only from incompetent leadership but equally from "vast forces of national greed and national hatred" which statesmen merely let loose.[10] In fact, viewing the public support for the war, Russell deprecated the excuse that the Belgian invasion had turned the tide of opinion from war opposition to enthusiasm. He suggested instead that an eager public was thankful to be spared moral responsibility for British participation by virtue of Germany's "immoral" act.[11] England, he wrote, "no other than any other nations which participate in this war, can be absolved either as regards its national passions or as regards its diplomacy."[12]

Russell's opposition to the war was not calculated only upon an assessment of material benefits versus costs. His pacifism also grew out of the simple conviction that "the enemy are men."[13] In 1914 Russell reacted as though he possessed what Freud later called a "constitutional intolerance of war."[14] A basic pacifist conviction had evidently overwhelmed Russell as early as 1901. He was visiting a friend

who suffered greatly from the pain of her illness:

> She seemed cut off from everyone and everything by walls of agony, and the sense of the solitude of each human soul suddenly overwhelmed me. ...Suddenly the ground seemed to give way beneath me and I found myself in quite another region. Within five minutes I went through some reflections such as the following: the loneliness of the human soul is unendurable; nothing can penetrate it except the highest intensity of the sort of love that religious teachers have preached... At the end of those five minutes I had become an entirely different person. For a time a sort of mystic illumination possessed me... Having been an imperialist, I had become in those five minutes a pro-Boer and a pacifist.[15]

Further light is shed on the philosophic nature of Russell's position from a passage in his Autobiography:

> ...when the war came I felt as if I heard the voice of God. I knew that it was my business to protest, however futile protest might be. My whole nature was involved. As a lover of truth the national propaganda of the belligerant nations sickened me. As a lover of civilization the return to barbarism appalled me. As a man of thwarted parental feeling the massacre of the young wrung my heart. I hardly supposed that much good would come of opposing the war, but I felt that for the honour of human nature those who were not swept off their feet should show that they stood firm.[16]

As a member of that European community of intellectuals who had shared a common source of values transcending national boundaries, Russell saw war among European nations as "in essence, a civil war."[17] It threatened not only life and property, but the very values upon which European society rested:

> War at its outset integrates that life of a nation, but it disintegrates the life of the world, and in the long run the life of the nation too...[18]

Russell concluded that if the war persisted, "European civilization as we have known it will perish as completely as it perished when Rome fell before the Barbarians."[19]

Russell saw no grounds for war in any nation's political or economic interest; he felt a personal revulsion to war which derived

from basic elements of his whole life philosophy; he feared that this war would jeopardize even the bases of European civilization. For all of these reasons it was clear to Russell that the fighting should cease quickly. This required in his view, an immediate armistice and a negotiated peace. If this strategy were rebuffed by the other side, Russell would have preferred even an early British defeat to a continuation of the fighting:

> The utmost evil that the enemy could inflict through an unfavourable peace would be a trifle compared to the evil which all the nations inflict on themselves by continuing to fight.[20]

> Above all, I see that none of the issues in the war are as important as peace; the harm done by a peace which does not concede all that we desire is nothing in comparison to the harm done by the continuance of the fighting.[21]

Russell was, however, not unrealistic; he did not expect that his continuing agitation against the war could have any practical effect on the conflict, although it might help to build a better foundation for the post-war peace. Despite his probable ineffectiveness he felt that opposition was the only available alternative. Whether it was for the "honour of human nature" or because of his conviction that this conflict was fundamentally illogical, Russell never wavered in his view that the only justifiable war aim was peace.

* * *

Freud encountered World War I at a particularly difficult period in his life. The struggling psychoanaltic movement had recently been fractionalized by the defection of Alfred Adler and Carl Jung. Furthermore, the fact that he was Jewish and that he purported to establish a science which had become notorious for its emphasis on sex underscored Freud's alienation from the mainstream of Viennese society. In contrast, the outbreak of World War I brought a fresh and perhaps novel sense of

national participation to him. Freud immediately associated himself with his countrymen in their enthusiasm for the conflict. On July 26 he wrote to his friend Karl Abraham:

> ...for the first time in thirty years I feel myself to be an Austrian and feel like giving this not very hopeful Empire another chance. Morale everywhere is excellent. Also the liberating effect of courageous action and the secure prop of Germany contribute a great deal to this.[22]

Similarly to many Europeans, the war appeared to Freud as a liberation from the boredom and meaninglessness that marked contemporary European life. On August 2 he emphasized his commitment to the struggle with only one reservation: "...the <u>great</u> war can now be regarded as assured; I should be with it with all my heart if I did not know England to be on the wrong side."[23] But irrespective of England, the German cause became his own:

> Like everyone else I live from one German victory to the next, and torment myself meanwhile with fear of fresh complications, breaches of neutrality etc. The tremendous feats of our allies seem already to have saved us. These are great and terrible times.[24]

Freud's involvement in the war during these first months was motivated less by hostility towards the enemy than out of identification with his fellow countrymen's struggle. His excitement derived not from particular issues at stake, but from the satisfying sense of comitment the war brought to an enervated society pervaded with cultural malaise. With almost childlike enthusiasm he asked of his friend Abraham: "can you tell me whether if in a fortnight's time we shall be thinking half-ashamedly of the excitement of these days...?"[25] Actually, in a fortnight's time, Freud was already beginning to temper his war enthusiasm, a process which eventually led him in 1939 to ask: "how long shall we have to wait before the rest of mankind become pacifists too?"[26] By

October 31, 1914, Freud pointed out in a more dispassionate letter to Abraham the theme that would characterize his position for the remaining war years:

> I have noticed that obsessional people feel better now in wartime we have descended to their level.[27]

This is the first clear indication of Freud's perception of the war in psychoanalytic terms, a perception which led in 1915 to his "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death." As an Austrian, Freud initially encountered the war as a patriot. However, in his role as psychoanalyst, he was soon led to abandon his enthusiasm. Freud's feelings changed after 1914 from sympathy for the war to disgust.

* * *

At the outbreak of World War I Romain Rolland was holidaying in Vevey, Switzerland. On July 31 he noted sadly:

> It is one of the finest days of the year, an exquisite evening. The mountains float on a light mist, luminous and tinged with blue; moonlight throws a flood of red gold out onto the lake... The air is delightful, the scent of the plants floating in the night; and the stars shine with a pure lustre. It is in this divine peace and tender beauty that the people of Europe begin the great slaughter.[28]

For Rolland the war came unexpectedly but his reactions were initially clear and forceful:

> I am overcome. I wish to be dead. It is horrible to live in the midst of this demented humanity, and to attend, powerless, at the bankruptcy of civilization. This European war is the greatest catastrophe in history for centuries, the ruin of my most sacred hopes in human fraternity.[29]

"The ruin of sacred hopes..." In Rolland's view the war was primarily a moral debacle, a demonstrated failure of civilized values to maintain themselves as the criteria of politial action. As the only individual he could see who stood against the war, Rolland accepted the mantle of

a Saviour whose task it was to protect a betrayed civilization in the moments of its greatest peril. This self-defined role required that Rolland remain "above the battle," removed from the contamination of the struggle. He saw his residence among the Swiss Alps as an ideal metaphor, a perfect location from which "to dominate the passions of Europe."[30] Here Rolland could "stand in the midst of the tempest like an island of justice and peace, where, as in the great Monasteries of the early Middle Ages, the spirit may find refuge from unbridled force."[31] It was a symbolically perfect locale to which to summon "a moral high court, a tribunal of consciences to watch and pass impartial judgement on any violations of the laws of nations."[32] To Rolland the world was aflood with moral sickness and he claimed as his task - and his task alone - its salvation.

It must be emphasized that, although Rolland's locale was a "refuge from unbridled force," it was not intended to be a refuge from the issues of war itself. Rolland saw his function in a very active light: "to pass impartial judgement on any violations of the laws of nations." With a mandate left to him by default, Rolland designated himself Europe's moral judge, accepted the war as a fait accompli and proceeded immediately to evaluate the participants. Opposed to the war in principle, he nevertheless threw himself with caustic energy into the fray.

As judge of morality, Rolland was almost overcome by the illegal invasion of Belgium by the Germans. Until Christmas 1914 it completely dominated his perspective on the war. "I suffer more for [Belgium] than for my own country," he wrote, "I will never, never pardon Germany for what she has done in Belgium."[33] In his first

published article of the war, Rolland challenged the German intellectual community to repudiate "the Huns who command you":

> Are you the sons of Goethe or Attila? Are you making war on enemies or the human spirit? I challenge you...to protest with all your energy against this crime which is recoiling upon you.[34]

As the German armies passed through Louvain and then shelled the cathedral at Rheims, Rolland turned with wrath and bitterness to the Germans from whom he had hoped a positive reply:

> Race of Pharisees, what chastisement from on high shall scourge your sacreligious pride![35]

During these early months there was in fact no reply to Rolland's charges in Germany and he could only inveigh against an evidently irreformable imperialism:

> Prussian imperialism is the most dangerous. Its hand uplifted in menace against Europe has forced us to join in arms against this outcome of a military and feudal caste, which is the curse not only of the rest of the world, but also of Germany itself. We must destroy this first.[36]

In burning Louvain and bombarding the cathedral, the German high command had attacked Rolland's cultural icons. Rolland, protector of the European heritage, was moved to write: "Kill men if you like, but respect masterpeices. They are the patrimony of the human race."[37]

In his outrage against Germany, Rolland the mystic pacifist allied himself intimately with the cause of France. "Forced to join in arms" he exalted the defending armies of the Entente. Judged by "neutral" standards of "absolute" morality, France was, in Rolland's view, the only hope for Europe's salvation. Judged from "above the battle" it was Rolland's directive that the Germans be crushed:

> France, invaded once more, will meet the test without complaint; they can crush her and ruin her but they cannot

> subdue her. The prize of Paris will change nothing this time; it will be necessary to take the war to the Pyrenees. Everyone has sacrificed their lives and their fortunes - but what must unite all of us, the entire European elite, is the defense of the treasures of the human spirit, menaced by the rage of the Huns.[38]

Rolland called for a "sacred" alliance between Europe's intellectual elite and the soldiers of France. In this battle against a country he could never forgive, Rolland delineated only the roles of intellectual and soldier - their goals were identical:

> To each one his lot. Soldier of the Republic, do not trouble yourself with our non-beneficial thoughts; accomplish with joy your heroic task. Ours (ours, what am I saying, I am alone), mine is without happiness, but not without light.[39]

While the French soldiers killed, the intellectuals, or was it to be Rolland alone, would ensure the purity of their acts by "supervising" them from a position of intellectual neutrality. The ennobling if unhappy challenge to France was to fight with all her energy for "right," to "fight without hatred, and to regard even those against whom she is forced to fight as misguided brothers who must be pitied when they have been rendered harmless."[40] Such was the burden of the Christian and the cultured.

Rolland's position in the autumn of 1914 can only be understood as coherent if the sequence of his views is clearly perceived. His initial reaction to the war was complete opposition. He regarded it as an immoral aberration and a vital threat to the long-standing but fragile values characteristic of European civilization. He subsequently defined himself as sole protector of those values. But it was not to be a passive role. Rolland observed both sides in action and soon concluded that Germany was the primary threat to the European heritage. France therefore emerged as the saviour. This judgement

in favour of the Entente having been made, Rolland set about to ensure that France lived up to its mission. During the battle of the Marne, he expressed his finely-balanced attitude most explicitly:

> The evil is done now, the torment is let loose and we cannot force it back into its channel unaided. Moreover crimes have been committed against right, attacks on the liberties of peoples and on the sacred treasures of thought, which must and will be expiated. Europe cannot pass over unheeded the violence done to the noble Belgian people...But in the name of Heaven, let not these crimes be expiated by similar crimes! ...a great nation does not revenge itself, it re-establishes justice.
>
> It is [the intellectuals'] duty to keep this before them; nor will we be passive and wait for the fury of this conflict to spend itself.[41]

Rolland issued his calls to action with all of the encyclical trappings that might have been expected to adorn the pronouncements of a Saviour. A rational man could only call for a war of conversion and sacrificial death in the name of absolute or eternal values, still regarding himself as "above the battle,"[42] if he really believed himself to possess rare and singular insights into "universal truth" and "eternal justice." Romain Rolland evidently experienced little difficulty in supporting that belief in himself in 1914.

Rolland's perspectives on the war became progressively less one-sided as time passed - as the facility of drawing moral distinctions among participating nations diminished. By December 1914, Rolland like Freud, began to recover from the disorienting effects of strong initial emotions:

> Modern Germany, with its enormous, its crushing egoism of race, repels me more than all of the intolerant pride of this or that other nation. But an instinct of justice..., a need for equilibrium has made me react, in the camp of the allies, against their sincere but hallucinatory pretentions to claim too much reason and too much right, - and to abuse it.[43]

This statement, made in December 1914, illustrates the beginnings of a disillusionment and reordering of thought that convinced Rolland by 1916 of the need for a European socialist revolution.

Romain Rolland and Bertrand Russell reacted to the outbreak of World War I in comparable sequences. They initially established an attitude based on principle - to Russell the war was an illogical mistake threatening the very bases of European civilization; to Rolland it was an abdication of morality which demanded constant supervision by independent intellectuals to ensure that it "stay in hand." Secondly they reacted strongly to particular issues, especially the invasion of Belgium. Here the practical contrast arising from their differing initial assumptions became clear. Given Russell's adamant refusal to accept the rationality of this war at all, even the invasion of Belgium was an insufficient atrocity to draw him into partisanship. In contrast, Rolland's singular concern with simple morality created of him a virulent supporter of the Entente. This despite his general opposition to the conflict. As a matter of logic Russell demanded that the war immediately cease; as a matter of morality, Rolland insisted that it be salvaged. Opposed to the war from the outset, Russell remained in opposition throughout; originally opposed to the war in principle, Rolland allowed himself in 1914 to become a leading partisan.

Sigmund Freud escaped these initial trials of conscience because he was a relatively unconscious emotional supporter of the war in the first months. A more detached and intellectually responsible attitude came to Freud in 1915 when he wrote "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death." Only then did he join with Russell and Rolland in

facing wartime conflicts among principles, hopes and realities.

Russell, Freud and Rolland each reacted strongly to the outbreak of World War I. It is interesting to note the extent to which their early reactions to the war were reflected in later views on the relation of aggression to the nature of man and the state, and to the role of intellectuals in politics and society.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER I

[1]Bertrand Russell, Autobiography, II (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1951), 5.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., p. 48.

[4]Ibid., p. 42

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., p. 7.

[7]Ibid., p. 4.

[8]Ibid., p. 6.

[9]Ibid., p. 41.

[10]Ibid., p. 42.

[11]Ibid., p. 4.

[12]Ibid., p. 42.

[13]Ibid., p. 41.

[14]Sigmund Freud, "Why War?" in Character and Culture, ed. by Philip Rieff (New York: Collier Books, 1963), p. 147.

[15]Bertrand Russell, Autobiography, I (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1951), pp. 220-221.

[16]Russell, Autobiography, II, 7.

[17] Ibid., p. 25.

[18] Bertrand Russell, Principles of Social Reconstruction (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1916), p. 233.

[19] Russell, Autobiography, II, 23-24.

[20] Russell, Principles, p. 85.

[21] Russell, Autobiography, II, 25.

[22] Sigmund Freud, A Psychoanalytic Dialogue, ed. by Hilda Abraham and Ernst Freud; trans, by Bernard Marsh and Hilda Abraham (London: Hogarth Press, 1965), p. 196.

[23] Ibid., p. 90.

[24] Ibid., p. 193.

[25] Ibid., p. 186.

[26] Freud, "Why War?", p. 147.

[27] Freud, Dialogue, p. 201.

[28] Romain Rolland, Journal des Années de Guerre (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1952), p. 31. All quotations from the Journal are my translation.

[29] Ibid., pp. 32-33.

[30] Romain Rolland, Deux Hommes se Rencontrent, ed. by Madame Jean-Richard Bloch and Madame Romain Rolland (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1964), p. 271. All quotations from Deux Hommes are my translations.

[31] Romain Rolland, Above the Battle, trans. by C.K. Ogden (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1916), p. 55.

[32] Ibid., pp. 51-52.

[33]Romain Rolland, Chère Sophia, ed. by Marie Romain Rolland (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1960), pp. 217-218. My translation. However, at Christmas 1914 Romain Rolland read the British Blue Book which inadvertently indicated the extent to which the Allies were implicated in bringing about the war in July and August, 1914: "I could not believe my eyes." Rolland, Journal, p. 199. All quotations from Chère Sophia are my translation.

[34]Rolland, Battle, p. 21.

[35]Ibid., p. 28.

[36]Ibid., p. 50.

[37]Ibid., p. 21.

[38]Romain Rolland quoted in Romain Rolland et le Mouvement Florentine de la Voce, ed. by Henri Giordan (Paris: A. Michel, 1966), p. 335. My translation.

[39]Rolland, Deux Hommes, p. 278.

[40]Rolland, Battle, p. 101.

[41]Ibid., p. 51.

[42]On August 1, 1916 Rolland attempted to explain the insufficiencies of Above the Battle by describing his need for discretion in projecting the correct image: "Not being a work of art, Above the Battle does not express to advantage my total thought. I give only what I wish to give for the moment, what I believe able to be useful. I do not expose the positive political grounds that legitimize it. What I allow to appear is the sentimental side." Rolland, Journal pp. 863-864.

[43]Romain Rolland quoted in René Cheval, Romain Rolland, L'Allemagne et la Guerre (Paris: Press Universitaires de France, 1963), p. 289. My translation. Although he generally judged war in relation to the "divine" values that he was defending, Rolland paused in November 1914 to imagine what practical implications the defeat of Germany might have on Europe. Germany's powers of "organization" and "regimentation" would be lost to Europe: "one is not able to say that a people who has this ideal is contemptible... Why not salute the greatness of an enemy?

I would dare go further... I would dare to say that if...this Imperial dream goes under with the German Empire, the civilization of the West will have lost the only chance of duration or of supremacy that remains to it between the emerging empires of Asia and America. The spirit will perhaps gain, (and that is personally what is important to me), but the skeleton of Europe will be broken." Rolland, Journal, pp. 118-119.

CHAPTER II

BERTRAND RUSSELL

In 1914 Bertrand Russell published a collection of articles under the title Principles of Social Reconstruction, a book which he regarded as a complete change from anything he had previously written. The ideas expressed in it had come, according to Russell, in a spontaneous manner,[1] and in its exclusive concentration on practical social questions it illustrated how rapidly his concerns had altered since the outbreak of the war. In the following three years he published three subsequent volumes similarly directed. Justice in Wartime (1917) was a further collection of articles, Political Ideals (1917) a series of lectures banned in Britain but published in the United States, and Roads to Freedom (1918) a critical evaluation of contemporary socialist doctrine in Europe. Three of the four titles were oriented to the future and they served as Russell's forum from which to describe his vision of post-war society.

The Nature of Man as Clay

It was the stated aim of Principles of Social Reconstruction to suggest "a philosophy of politics based upon the belief that impulse has more effect than conscious purpose in molding men's lives."[2] As he made clear at the outset of the war, Russell saw a direct relationship between aggression and the instinctual inheritance of man. Although he evidently had no formal knowledge of psychoanalysis before

1914, he agreed with D.H. Lawrence that "politics could not be divorced from individual psychology."[3] Unacquainted with the systematization of concepts offered by Freud in his psychic description of man, Russell nevertheless produced striking parallels to Freud's "scientific" definitions. However, Russell's interpretations and conclusions took him a considerable distance from formal psychoanalysis, largely because Russell was philosophically unwilling to deny man's potential control over his own future. Where Freud came to deprecate the value of political and economic changes made in the hope of improving human nature, Russell came to exalt them.

Unlike Romain Rolland, who avoided serious comment on matters of psychology, Russell was emphatic about the power and quality of instincts in man. Similarly to later theorists of aggression, Russell asserted sarcastically that "fighting and killing are among the natural activities of males, both of human beings and of the higher animals,"[4] and he was quite prepared to draw obvious graphic similies:

> When two dogs fight in the street, no one supposes that anything but instinct prompts them, or that they are inspired by high and noble ends... They fight really because something angers them in each other's smell... And what is true of dogs in the street is equally true of nations in the present war.[5]

What was true of dogs and nations applied even to family life where, to Russell's mind, if "threats and terrorism were not prevented by law...cruelty would be rife in the relationships of men and women and of parents and children."[6] With the disillusioning memory of the London crowd of 1914 as the enduring background to his thoughts, Russell was as ready as Freud to admit that individuals possessed a set of primal drives among which was the powerful urge to kill. When

one individual's instinct was combined, as Russell saw it, with the gregarious or "herd" instinct binding men together in an implicitly anti-foreign identity, war was especially difficult if not impossible to prevent. And once precipitated it was even more difficult to control. Although it was therefore unlikely that he could have a significant effect on the present war, Russell was quite willing to envision a long-term program through which war would become less likely. That he could do so was a result of his view that men's constituent factors were rather more malleable than Freud was prepared to allow.

Although Russell clearly recognized particular instincts such as the urge to kill as the basis of men's propensity to war, this view was soon superceded by a more general theory of "Impulse" that effectively denied significance to specific human drives. In spite of his early analogy to dogs, Russell was quick to include conditions and qualifications in his views of instinct when they might otherwise have clouded his freedom of intellectual action:

> I think that it is true that many men have an instinct towards war, but unless it is aroused by its appropriate stimulus it may well remain completely latent. The instinct, and the machination of war-mongers, are both needed to bring about war.[7]

In another passage Russell described this instinct as "the wild beast slumbering in almost every man"[8] and suggested that with careful handling this otherwise passive force might not awaken. Russell assumed a typically Victorian stance here in his description of statesmen whose "activities are exactly analagous to those men who distribute indecent pictures or produce lascivious plays."[9] In stimulating irresponsible nationalism, political leaders had awoken that

uncontrollable beast. Russell, like many a Victorian nanny was accepting the view that the potential for evil and violence was already constituted and present in all men, requiring only a sinister catalyst to see it realized.

Having first softened his concept of aggressive instincts by attributing to them only latent power, Russell then generalized his definitions completely and in so doing, repudiated a potential connection with Freudian psychology. When it became clear to him that "the very same vital energy that produces all that is best in man also produces war and the love of war,"[10] the field was obviously open to the complete manipulation of instinct. To Russell, "Impulse" became an undifferentiated pool of psychic energy that might express itself in any number of different directions depending upon the stimuli: "Impulse is the expression of life, and while it exists there is a hope of its turning towards life instead of death..."[11] Faced with the unworked clay of Impulse man certainly possessed the potential to direct his fate. In spite of Russell's previous statement that "fighting is an instinctive activity of males," he denied fundamental tenets of Freud's theory and opened wide the vistas of social engineering in stating that primal urges are:

> no longer ineradicable in human nature. All are diminishing under the influence of modern social organization. All might be redressed to a degree which could make them almost innocuous if early education and current moral standards were directed to that end.[12]

In this way Russell extolled the potential power of community organization in neutralizing harmful human urges. "Every man has it in his being to develop into something good or bad," he wrote, "there is a best possible for him and a worst possible. His circumstances

will determine..."[13] Russell had simplified human nature to the point where "through the influence of institutions and habits, without any fundamental change in human nature, men would learn to look back on war as we look upon the burning of heretics or upon human sacrifice to heathen deities."[14] In fact, his enthusiasm for the concept of man as clay developed to the point at which he exclaimed in 1917:

> If a majority in every civilized country desired, we could within twenty years...fill the world with beauty and joy, and secure the reign of intellectual peace. It is only because men are apathetic that this is not achieved, only because imagination is sluggish, and what always has been is regarded as what always must be.[15]

It is difficult to imagine a statement less in accordance with the conclusions of Sigmund Freud. Although Russell had recognized the importance of specific psychological factors in the coming of the First World War, he refused to give these factors currency for the future. In 1918 he expressed in three sentences the crux of his whole wartime attitude:

> A correct diagnosis is necessarily the first step towards a cure. The existing evils in international relations spring, at bottom, from motives forming part of human life as it is at present...But the evils arising from these causes can be removed by a better education and a better economic and political system.[16]

What did Russell regard as the basic "motives forming human life as it is at present"?

As early as November 1914, Russell expressed a variation of Freud's central thesis about the significance of cultural boredom in relation to war, and the dangerous long-term consequences of excessive instinctual repression. Russell recognized that had a diplomatic solution been achieved at the last moment in 1914, "there would have

been almost universal disappointment."[17] Like Freud, he emphasized that the prewar value system had been far too limiting on instinctual expression, leading to an exaggerated love of excitement and a strong desire "for the letting loose of some instinct, no matter what, as a relief from a life unduly full of inhibitions."[18] There was a thrill in the coming of war that occurred in almost every historical instance if only to provide an escape from what might be termed normal social control of instinctual "pleasures":

> Owing to the activities of the police, opportunities for these pleasures are much curtailed in civilized countries. For this reason, when war is coming, there is a liberation of a whole set of instinctual activities normally repressed. This brings with it an exhilaration comparable to that of falling in love.[19]

World War I, violent and propagandistic, demonstrated that instinctual repression had reached new extremes. The living conditions of modern industrial revolution had left men behind. Russell concluded that "the disease from which the civilized world is suffering is a complex one, derived from the failure of men's instincts to keep pace with changing material conditions."[20] He expressed sympathetic understanding of the inhibited Victorian male:

> To this vicitim of order and good organization the realization comes, in some moment of sudden crisis, that he belongs to a nation, that his nation may take risks, may engage in difficult enterprises, enjoy the hot passions of doubtful combat, stimulate adventure and imagination by military expeditions to Mount Sinai and the Garden of Eden.[21]

Although this description almost exactly parallels that of Freud,[22] it is essential to note the differing contexts of their respective views on repression.

Russell described the inconsistency between civilized standards and psychological realities as "a failure of men's instincts" in contrast to Freud's "hypocrisy of society."[23] The division here is important. It is implied in Russell's statement that instincts should adjust to modern society whereas Freud suggests that society conform to a more workable relationship. Was Russell then advocating even tighter instinctual repression and Freud the return to a more licentious past? Freud's prescription is dealt with below but it is clear that Russell was no believer in repression as the road to social and international peace.

Russell agreed with Freud's analysis of the counterproductive effects of instinctual repression, but he did not therefore abandon the task of value formation. Russell simply asserted that from each man's energetic pool of undifferentiated Impulse, positive instinctual expression could be elicited to replace aggressive emotion, thus consigning the need for instinctual repression to an earlier age. What was needed, in fact, was the opposite of repression: "the greatest possible freedom and stimulus to individual vitality..."[24] Conditions of modern life, objective and traditional, could be altered to minimize the potential for aggression and encourage instead the free and positive growth of that vital energy of life - Impulse. Impulse, the nature of man, was defined in Russell's terms as any possibility. It should not be repressed but rather stimulated to growth for "lack of impulse," like its distorting inhibition, "is death and out of death no new life will come."[25] Russell had stated that the causes of evil human motives could be removed by "a better education and a better economic and political

system." His task now was to describe what characteristics this system would possess.

The State as Tyrant

Like Freud, Russell viewed the state as repressive in nature but, in contrast to Freud, he refused to admit of its necessity. Freud accepted state controls (up to a point) because the nature of man demanded them; Russell rejected central political direction as inimical to individual instinctual growth and happiness. It was Russell's opinion that "the excessive power of the state, partly through internal oppression, but principally through war, is one of the chief causes of misery in the modern world."[26]

Freud stated that the state outlawed individual violence not to abolish it, but to monopolize it.[27] Russell agreed: "it is the essence of the state to suppress violence within and to facilitate it without."[28] Russell also agreed that the lack of what might be termed an effective "international superego" was at the root of the dilemma. But rather than acquiesce to the apparently inevitable, Russell launched a major attack on the evils of state sovereignty. External sovereignty was but an excuse for internal irresponsibility. The fact that states existed without effective limits to their rights of action provided each one individually with the rationale for imposing excessive restrictions and obligations internally upon its unmindful citizens:

> It is amazing that the vast majority of men should tolerate a system which compels them to submit to all the horrors of the battlefield at any moment when their government commands them to do so.[29]

As long as state sovereignty created international insecurity there

could be little improvement in terms of liberty in the internal situation of states and there would be little progress towards the elimination of war.

As each state depended upon the willingness of its citizens to sacrifice individual liberty in the name of the whole, nationalism had assumed the status of a modern religion, making of the crime of war a religious crusade:

> Like the ancient religions it demands its persecutions, its holocausts, its lurid heroic cruelties; like them it is noble, primitive, brutal and mad... Men must realize that the gods before whom they have bowed down were false gods, and the sacrifices they have made were in vain.[30]

To this problem of sovereignty Russell replied with fervent advocacy of a league of nations. Russell's league would possess only military powers, thus providing the external security requisite to domestic liberty and civil sovereignty. A pooling of military sovereignty at the international level would permit the fractionalization of power within each state. Thus could be achieved Russell's ideal of political and economic decentralization, for it was "the object of the pacifist...to give men more and more political control over their own lives..."[31]

Russell's analysis of the relationship between state sovereignty and internal repression - both of which contribute to the likelihood of war - seems valid. The suggestion that military sovereignty be taken over to some degree by an international organization was prevalent during the war but, in every case, it was difficult to suggest how such a transformation should take place. To a point, the differentiation of military from civil sovereignty was specious and Russell at least recognized the immense factors of tradition and

prejudice arraigned against such a separation. But while admitting the difficulty of overcoming such impediments, Russell described one hopeful sign in the effect of increasingly bitter warfare in creating a desire for change:

> The civilized races of the world are faced with the alternative of cooperation or mutual destruction. The present war is making this alternative daily more evident. And it is difficult to believe that, when the enmities that it has generated have had time to cool, civilized man will deliberately choose to destroy civilization, rather than acquiesce in the abolition of war.[32]

This was close to Rolland's opinion[33] but, unlike Rolland, Russell avoided a righteous condemnation of the state and characteristically viewed the problem as a problem of consciousness. Through increasing discussion of issues, abetted by the objective development of events, there was a level of intolerance, and in the case of war, of fear, at which public demand for remedial action was bound to become intense. Russell's attitude brings to mind the social reformers of nineteenth century England whose success in realizing legislation was almost always founded on a public crusade leading eventually to action. The methodology was similar again to that of Norman Angell in its faith that people would act according to their interests once their interests were accurately described - quite naive from Freud's point of view. Nevertheless it formed the basis of Russell's strategy for social change.

Russell was prepared to travel a tremendous distance in order to recognize the extent to which human actions could be environmentally molded, and in his views on the state and society he offered an extensive variety of comment on how his ideals might be achieved. But even more intriguing than his particular social

models was the confidence with which he approached the task of remolding other men's lives:

> When we have discovered what kinds of impulse we desire we must not rest content with preaching, or with trying to produce the outward manifestations without the inner spring: we must try rather to alter institutions in the way that will, of itself, modify the life of impulse in the desired direction.[34]

"Social reconstruction" would be the answer to "the fundamental problem of the pacifist [which] is to prevent the impulse towards war which seizes whole communities from time to time."[35] We have seen how Russell envisioned this goal as the provision of "the greatest possible freedom and stimulus to individual vitality and progress." Men would be encouraged to develop instinctually unimpeded - as long as they did not interfere with the development of other men. But it meant something more, for rather than leave the development of positive instinctual expression to chance, it was necessary that pacifists alter society "in advance" to guarantee it. Failure to do so had been the great prewar failure of the British intellectuals.[36] But Russell was emphasizing instinctual liberty as the terminal value of his reconstruction in a rather odd context. He recognized the difficulty himself:

> The state...is the most serious menace to liberty. And yet it seems that many of its functions must be expanded rather than curtailed.[37]

In Russell's system individual freedom could only be achieved through political manipulation. If there were no contradictions here there was a problem, and Russell met it with a limited definition of liberty:

> Liberty in itself is a negative principle; it tells us not

> to interfere but it does not give us a basis for reconstruction.[38]

Because an active program of social reconstruction was the fundamental requirement in solving the entire question of man and aggression in Russell's view, liberty would simply have to coexist with manipulation (planning). Although "the interference with liberty remains an evil...in some cases it is clearly a smaller evil than the spread of the disease that liberty would produce."[39] Liberty would have to suffer in its own name.

Russell was acutely aware of the danger of applying absolute values to problems of political organization. He regarded most attempts to do so as serious threats to the encouragement of "creativeness, vigour, vitality and the joy of life"[40] which were in his opinion the most important goals of political institutions. Certainly the existing state had proven fatal to the realization of these aims, and "orthodox socialism might prove equally fatal."[41] Marxian socialists, in applying economic equality as the almost sole criterion to the creation of a new society, ignored a large part of human nature and inclined towards a state in which, in Russell's opinion, it would likely be a horror to live. If there were to be one principle applied to political theorizing, as a lesser of evils, it had to be that of liberty. This applied both to healthy politics and individual instincts. True liberty could only survive in a social environment that satisfied instincts in a creative manner. That environment had yet to be constructed.

It is not possible here to survey Russell's complete case for a new society. But he made it clear that the existing economic

system was as implicated as the sovereign state in the predilection of the masses for war. On one hand conditions associated with the industrial revolution were responsible; on the other, war was the outgrowth of unrestricted capitalism.

Consistent with his emphasis on the need for instinctual liberty, Russell maintained that "the chief test of an economic system is not whether it makes men prosperous, or whether it secures distributive justice (though these are both very desirable), but whether it leaves men's instinctual growth unimpeded."[42] As for the status quo, Russell asserted that "except slavery, the present industrial system is the most destructive of life that has ever existed."[43] The assembly-line economy had removed the industrial worker from the results of his labour and separated him from the social significance of his product - both highly alienating factors. Repetition of the same task and lack of control over the total process made pride in work virtually impossible, causing the "universal weariness which devitalizes urban and industrial populations, making them perpetually seek excitement, and leading them to welcome even the outbreak of war as a relief from the dreary monotony of their daily lives."[44] The centrally-organized factory system had destroyed a great deal in life that Russell described as fundamentally precious, for although it had increased economic security and abundance, it had created a general cultural malaise among the workers: "adventure, imagination, risk, also have their claims; but how can these claims be satisfied by the ordinary wage-earner?"[45]

The other basic aspect of the economic system's contribution to war was its organization as capitalism. Russell asserted bluntly

that "schemes of foreign aggression entailing great loss of life and wealth in the nation, would hardly be initiated except by those whose instincts have been sharpened through the power derived from private property and the institutions of the Capitalist State."[46] Because capitalism was competitive, and because it offered economic security only to those who were successful in competition, it created a value system characterized by greed and aggression, inevitably producing "those who stand inside the cycle of instincts which lead to war."[47]

In this connection Russell expanded into a rather long and repetitive argument about the differences between "possessive" and "creative" impulses, describing the first as those aiming at the retention of limited goods (food, land) and therefore led to insecurity and aggression, and the second as positive instincts directed to illimitable resources (art, knowledge) and thus to peaceful and satisfying outcomes. The capitalist state and private property were "the greatest embodiments of possessiveness; it is for this reason that they are against life, and that they issue in war."[48] In reference to capitalism, war was "the final flower of an evil tree."[49] Other than the diminution of state sovereignty and changes in religious and educative norms, "the abolition of capitalism and the wage system would remove the chief incentive to fear and greed, those correlative passions by which all free life is choked and gagged."[50]

That Bertrand Russell concluded that a change in the economic system could eliminate "the chief incentive to fear and greed" is another indication of how far removed he was from Freud's views. It is suggested somewhere that the goal of Marxism is the elimination of alienation, and although Russell was not a Marxist, he shared this

goal. The goal was achievable for him in contrast to Freud because Russell held a basically materialist view of man. The environment, as the foundation of the superstructure of the mind, was always subject to control.

The closest thing that Russell could suggest to replace capitalism was a liberal modification of the guild system. In the reorganization of the economy the universal principle was to be "autonomy within each politically [economically] important group, and a neutral authority for deciding questionsinvolving relations between groups."[51] By introducing democracy into the management of industry "as the syndicalists advise,"[52] men would be able to identify with their economic function in society - they would develop a stake in social life that satisfied their needs for adventure and risk without war. Stating that "all institutions, if they are not to hamper individual growth, must be based as far as possible upon voluntary cooperation,"[53] Russell envisioned the state as a dynamic inter-relationship of autonomous groups, "jealous of their privileges and determined to preserve their autonomy."[54] Society, by abolishing private property, would provide each individual with economic security without eliminating the healthy stimulation of modest inter-group competition. The only general political body required would be Russell's "neutral" regulating authority. With the elimination of centralized political and economic power, the connection between the organization of the state and war would be largely severed. Russell suggested that a great diminution of oppression would come from the withering of the state. In one sense that was Marxism in reverse.

Intellectuals and the Powers of Thought

Russell may have formally placed Impulse at the centre of his political philosophy but his philosophic outlook was, in fact, predicated on man's ability to direct human affairs through the power of thought. Intellectuals and intellectualism were thus of major concern to Russell and a great deal of his wartime eloquence was reserved for them. Like Romain Rolland he placed primary value on "l'esprit libre:"

> I will not, on any consideration, surrender one particle of spiritual liberty. Physical liberty can be taken from a man, but spiritual liberty is his birthright...[55]

Russell saw in independent critical judgement more than a right, however; it was for the intellectuals also a duty - a service to mankind. Intellectuals provided a check to communal actions, reasserting as far as possible, the truth:

> Individual passions, except in lunatics, produce only the germs of myths, perpetually neutralized by the indifference of others; but collective passions escape this corrective, and generate in time what appears like overwhelming evidence for wholly false beliefs.
> Men of learning, who are acquainted with the part played by collective error in the history of religion, ought to have been on their guard against assaults upon their credulity.[56]

Russell was unrestrained in his attack on the prewar activities of the British intellectuals. His offensive was similar to Freud's in its charge of irrelevance, but where Freud attached a kind of passive irresponsibility to them, Russell charged the intellectuals with criminal negligence because of their failure to provide "creative spiritual leadership." He declared that they had led the idealistic young with a cynical lack of faith:

> It is we, the old, who have sinned; we have sent these young men to the battlefield for our evil passions, our spiritual

> death, our failure to live generously out of the warmth of the heart and out of the living wisdom of the spirit. Let us come out of this death, for it is we who are dead, not the young men who have died through our fear of life. Their very ghosts have more life than we: they hold us up forever to the shame and obloquy of all the ages to come. Out of their ghosts must come life, for it is we whom they must vivify.[57]

Russell's attack was not directed like Freud's to a disoriented group of mystic intellectuals unconscious of reality, but to intellectuals who lived on nothing but realities. He charged them, not with an excess of passionate and misdirected idealism, but with having had no idealism at all. They had become businessmen of the mind, without love of intellectual adventure or risk, and in their lack of vitality they had been rightly if tragically supplanted by their youthful followers. Russell noted that from the beginning of the war the intellectuals had willingly undertook to "provide their respective governments with those ingenious distortions and subtle untruths by which it is made to appear that all good is on one side and all wickedness on the other."[58] They were simply traitors to a crucial cause:

> Allegiance to country has swept away allegiance to truth. Thought has become the slave of instinct, not its master. The guardians of the temple of truth have betrayed it to idolaters, and have been the first to promote the idolatrous worship.[59]

In Russell's view it was incredible that the intellectuals should devote themselves with such vigour to what was little more than an illogical crusade of nationalism:

> This war is trivial for all its vastness. No great principle is at stake, no great human purpose is involved on either side. The supposed ideals for which it is being fought are merely part of the myth.[60]

In spite of clear warnings by people like Norman Angell, the intellectuals had accepted the myth and succumbed to the instincts implicit in nationalism. Russell could well understand the war

enthusiasm of the masses, but he expressed profound disappointment that the professors should have allowed themselves an equal enthusiasm. He had supposed that "intellectuals frequently loved truth, but he found here again that not ten percent of them preferred truth to popularity."[61] In 1916 he expressed his bitterness in a letter to President Wilson:

> I speak only because I must; because others who should have remembered civilization and human brotherhood have allowed themselves to be swept away by national passion; because I am compelled by their apostacy to speak in the name of reason and mercy, lest it should be thought that no one in Europe remembers the work which Europe has done and ought still to do for mankind.[62]

President Wilson never replied.

As an intellectual rule in dealing with problems Russell demanded that "whatever we have to say must be regarded as in the nature of practical maxims, to be applied with common sense..."[63] In his own evaluations of the war, in sharp contrast to Romain Rolland, Russell repudiated the value of ethical judgements, recalling in 1918 his original "practical" objections to the war:

> How could anyone...expect me to join in the trivial, self-righteous moral condemnation of the Germans? All moral condemnation is utterly against the view that was then new to me but is now more and more a part of my being.[64]

Russell's justification for wartime opposition rested on the contention that the grounds for the war were insufficient and, even in the face of general support, it had to be resisted. Alone this position might have been esentially non-creative but Russell also opposed the war because, like Freud, he feared for its negative effects in the long-run - on international relations and on the individuals within each state. "The habit of violence," he wrote, "once acquired, however legitimately, is not easily set aside, and the respect for law

and order is likely to be much less after the war than it was before."[65] Like Romain Rolland he deemed it both possible and necessary that the intellectuals "mitigate the abhorrence with which the nations have come to regard each other, to help towards mutual understanding, to make the peace, when it comes, not a mere cessation due to weariness, but a fraternal reconciliation, springing from the realization that the strife has been a folly of blindness."[66]

Russell was, however, far from content with the repetition of hopes and values, and his wartime articles demonstrate the attempts he made to constructively apply his psychological insights to practical political situations. But in almost every case Russell's political models were revolutionary in their divergeance from the status quo. In fact, his suggestions necessarily implied a transformation of the existing manifestations of human nature. Ignoring any challenge from the powers of Impulse upon which he claimed to found his political philosophy, Russell saw only the apathy or unconsciousness of the masses as the major impediments to change and he discounted even these as serious practical difficulties:

> The difficulty involved is merely the difficulty of inspiring men with hope, of giving them enough imagination to see that the evils from which they suffer are unnecessary, and enough thought to understand how the evils are to be cured.
>
> Impediments to change will not be overcome if the leaders of organized labour have no breadth of outlook, no vision, no hopes beyond some slight superficial improvement within the framework of the existing system. Revolutionary action may be unnecessary, but revolutionary thought is indispensable.[67]

In his valuable book on pacifism, D.A. Martin examines the liberal's faith that man need only be exposed to the truth and he will see it.[68] Martin refers to this faith with scepticism and its inadequacy, at least in the short-run, seems well demonstrated. How

utopian then was Russell's position, illuminated by Norman Angell's famous thesis that the "disappearance of international hostility depends on nothing more intricate than the realization of facts."[69] But more than utopian, how inconsistent was it in the context of Russell's overall schema of thought during the war? He introduced his Principles of Social Reconstruction by stating that it was his aim to found a philosophy of politics which recognized that "impulse had more effect than conscious action in molding men's lives."[70] Although Russell may have "recognized" this principle, the implementation of his political philosophy depended squarely on each man's power of independent conscious decision, Russell's "indispensable revolutionary thought." Russell was quite inconsistent on this point and it stands out as the basic flaw in his wartime position. In the end, in spite of his conspicuous deference to the power of impulse in man, Russell rested his political philosophy on the power of thought:

> Thought looks into the pit of Hell and is not afraid.... Thought is great and swift and free, the light of the world, and the chief glory of man.[71]

But while thought was the greatest human power, the power requisite to the realization of his political philosophy, Russell joined Freud in criticizing those philosophies that ignored the fact that reason was not usually in control. A call to reason was insufficient, said Russell, "too negative, too little living"[72] to the task of reconstruction. How could Russell not see that this precise criticism was directly applicable to his own position? It appears difficult to reconcile his coexistent views that the rule of reason alone was an insufficient goal of political philosophy, but that only through reason could the goals of a progressive political philosophy be

achieved. Either the task of implementation would have to fall to a powerful intellectual elite, or Russell's plans for reconstruction viewed with hopes for success only in the very long-run.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER II

[1]Russell, Autobiography, II, 10.

[2]Russell, Principles, p. 5.

[3]Russell, Autobiography, II, 11.

[4]Bertrand Russell, Justice in Wartime (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1917), p. 14.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Bertrand Russell, Roads to Freedom (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1918), p. 122.

[7]Russell, Justice, p. xiii.

[8]Ibid., p. 107.

[9]Ibid., p. 56.

[10]Russell, Principles, p. 95.

[11]Ibid., p. 21.

[12]Russell, Justice, p. 56.

[13]Bertrand Russell, Political Ideals (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1963 (1917), p. 10.

[14]Russell, Principles, p. 108.

[15]Russell, Political Ideals, p. 25.

[16]Russell, Roads to Freedom, p. 164.

[17]Russell, Justice, p. 59.

[18]Ibid., p. 60.

[19]Ibid., p. 15.

[20]Ibid., p. 90.

[21]Russell, Principles, p. 90.

[22]See below, p. 49.

[23]See below, pp. 47-49.

[24]Russell, Principles, p. 119.

[25]Ibid., p. 21.

[26]Ibid., p. 59.

[27]See below, p. 54.

[28]Russell, Principles, p. 59

[29]Ibid., p. 48.

[30]Ibid., p. 110.

[31]Ibid., p. 98.

[32]Russell, Political Ideals, p. 83.

[33]See below, p. 75.

[34]Russell, Political Ideals, p. 15.

[35]Russell, Principles, p. 93.

[36]See below, p. 34.

[37]Russell, Principles, p. 71.

[38]Ibid., p. 228.

[39]Ibid., p. 68.

[40]Ibid., pp. 134-135.

[41]Ibid., p. 120.

[42]Ibid., p. 135.

[43]Ibid., p. 244.

[44]Ibid., p. 138.

[45]Ibid., p. 89.

[46]Ibid., p. 59.

[47]Ibid., p. 48.

[48]Ibid., p. 235.

[49]Russell, Political Ideals, p. 27.

[50]Ibid., p. 25.

[51]Ibid., p. 5.

[52]Russell, Principles, p. 98.

[53]Ibid., p. 34.

[54]Russell, Roads to Freedom, p. 144.

[55]Russell, Justice, p. vii.

[56]Ibid., p. 5.

[57]Russell, Principles, p. 258.

[58]Russell, Justice, p. 1.

[59]Ibid., p. 3.

[60]Ibid., p. 13.

[61]Russell, Autobiography, II, 6.

[62]Ibid., p. 30.

[63]Russell, Justice, p. 39.

[64]Russell, Autobiography, II, 119.

[65]Russell, Justice, p. 109.

[66]Ibid., pp. 2-3.

[67]Russell, Political Ideals, p. 41.

[68]D.A. Martin, Pacifism, An Historical and Sociological Study (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1965), p. 147.

[69]Norman Angell, The Great Illusion (London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), p. 317.

[70]Russell, Principles, p. 5.

[71]Ibid., p. 151.

[72]Ibid., p. 12.

CHAPTER III

SIGMUND FREUD

By 1914 the psychoanalytic movement had achieved considerable notoriety within the informed European public as well as some measure of stature. But since the defections of Adler, Steckel and Jung, the movement had assumed an increasingly conservative posture as indicated by the formation of a "Defense Committee" around Freud composed of his closest supporters.[1] Nevertheless, during the war, Freud wrote prolifically and these years were scientifically productive ones. In addition to his numerous clinical papers there appeared a rather curious essay in 1915 entitled "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death." It is in this piece that most of Freud's explicit comments about the character of the First World War are contained.

Although Freud recognized that earlier thinkers had explored concepts of the unconscious, he regarded his own methodic revelation of the structure and power of the "id" as a fundamental scientific contribution to the twentieth century. He described three shocks that had confronted men's prideful self-image in history: the displacement by the Copernican of the Ptolemic view of the universe; the Darwinian explanation of the animal origins of man; and finally - the most bitter blow - psychoanalysis' demonstration that the ego or reason was not master in its own house, but directly dependent upon a series of relatively rigid instinctual constants grouped together in the id.[2]

Psychoanalysis had finally given credence to Bergson's and Nietzsche's deference to intuition and the unconscious, while at the same time denying that these obscure elements of human nature were beyond the pale of scientific investigation. From Freud's point of view, the unconscious was in principle as subject to scientific inquiry as, for example, the human anatomy.

Most simply stated, Freud maintained that apparently free or conscious individual acts were dictated to a large degree by the unconscious. Thus, in a letter to Frederick van Eeden, he was unrestrained in his indictment of what Romain Rolland described as "l'esprit libre." Psychoanalysis had demonstrated to Freud's satisfaction that "our intellect is a feeble and dependent thing, a plaything and a tool of our instincts and affects, and that we are all compelled to behave cleverly or stupidly according to the commands of our [emotional] attitudes and internal resistances."[3] To anchor mental characteristics this way in relatively unchanging and largely sexual or aggressive factors might have led Freud to a purely pessimistic Weltanschauung but, if there is a significant difference, he preferred to describe himself as a realist. In particular reference to the war, and basic to an understanding of Freud's entire wartime attitude, he wrote in 1915:

> I cannot be an optimist and I believe I differ from the pessimists only in so far as wicked, stupid, senseless things don't upset me, because I have accepted them from the beginning as part of what the world is composed of.[4]

An acceptance of reality, in the scientific sense of the term, based on empirical research, distinguished Freud throughout his life and his deprecation of the value of illusions prevented him from general assertions of faith uttered by thinkers like Romain Rolland and Bertrand

Russell. This is not to say that Freud failed to share their ideals, but only their idealism. He simply found it impossible to separate himself from the testimony of reality as he saw it in his work. He viewed the effects of purely ethical evaluations as "making the mental life of mankind not indeed better, but incomprehensible,"[5] and in his search for a truer formula of understanding he consistently attempted to avoid them.

The Nature of Man: No Escape From History

It was not difficult for Freud to discover in the war a plentiful source of circumstantial evidence to support his already established clincial descriptions of human nature. In his early remark to Karl Abraham about the new-found comfort of neurotic patients in wartime ("I have noticed the obsessional people feel better now in wartime we have descended to their level."), it was not so important that they had experienced such relief but, of course, that the majority of men should have descended to the neurotics' mode of release from psychic tension. After having recovered his own emotional balance after the first exciting days of the war, Freud noted the almost universal enthusiasm of Europeans for the conflict and accepted it with understanding - both because he had experienced such enthusiasm himself and because it accorded readily with the basic theses of psychoanalysis. Clearly Freud's movement was peculiarly suited to the acceptance of individual aggressive emotions as legitimate in themselves, arising out of an inherent constitution, and he drew these relationships specifically in "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death."

Freud established the theme for "Thoughts" by admitting rather generously at the outset that he, as well as many others, had previously

allowed himself to accept ideas about human nature and society which were "based on an illusion to which we had abandoned ourselves. In reality our fellow citizens have not sunk so low as we feared because they had never risen so high as we believed."[6] Freud was quite absolute in his emphasis on the strength and endurance of aggressive primal instincts in man. Although they had been repressed in most individuals, Freud insisted that age-old aggressive urges still threatened with all their original power along side those more recently acquired refined characteristics that had come to define civilized man. Man could not, in effect, escape his history. There was a plasticity in evolution that denied the eradicability of man's original animal instincts, and made their reappearance at suitable opportunities a constant possibility. Granted, over time, some men had "internalized" social controls over uninhibited instinctual expression in exchange for guarantees of love and could in this sense be described as firmly "civilized." But Freud suggested that many more acted in a civilized manner only through fear of punishment and that, in these numerous cases, "no ennoblement of instinct, no transformation of egoistic into altruistic inclinations has taken place within."[7] Although it was difficult to perceive in which cases "true" ennoblement had occurred, Freud maintained that "we are certainly misled by our optimism into grossly exaggerating the number of human beings who have been transformed in a civilized sense."[8] It was a rather unnerving picture of a large population seeking instinctual gratification whenever it was possible to do so undetected.

To control this menace Freud described a society largely dependent for its "civilized" status on firm instinctual repression. Encouraged by the successful transformation of that minority which had truly

internalized instinctual controls, "society has suffered itself to be led into straining the moral standard to the highest possible point," thus forcing the majority of its members into "a yet greater estrangement from their instinctual dispositions."[9] By this definition, civilization itself was "the fruit of the renunciation of instinctual satisfaction,"[10] a precarious and inherently unstable achievement always capable of regression to a more primitive instinctual state.

Freud indicated that unfortunately among the strongest of the stock of elemental urges common to all was that of killing:

> The very emphasis on the commandment Thou Shalt Not Kill makes it certain that we spring from an endless ancestry of murderers, with whom the lust for killing was in the blood, as possibly it is to this day with ourselves.[11]

He illustrated the continuing lust to kill even in normal situations when the unconscious murdered "even for trifles," by citing common phrases such as "the devil take you."[12] Indeed, from the unabashed emphasis he placed on the continuing efficacy of primal drives and the large numbers of people still seeking their gratification, the slaughter at the Somme might have been explained largely as the result of resurgent impulses; imperfectly controlled by a weak super-ego. But Freud's interpretation was, in some ways, the opposite.

If the death of an enemy, or of any human being including the father, were the obvious object of the lust to kill, Freud also described an equally powerful tendency to experience the reality of one's own death in everyday life. His point here rested simply on the contention that life could hardly offer all of its potential quality and excitement without risk or struggle. For a healthy psychic life, death had to occupy a place in reality, at least to the extent that if reflected a stimulating precariousness and fragility onto everyday existence.

In Freud's view, the subjection of death in modern society to the point at which it was avoided as a topic of discussion and was, in effect, no longer personally believed in, had led logically to boredom and a general feeling of anomie for "life is impoverished, it loses its interest when the highest stake in the game of living, life itself, may not be risked."[13] It was hardly a matter of wonder that when the opportunity arose to reinstate death to a position other than on the theatre stage, thrill-starved Europeans were available in the millions to flock to the experience of risking it. In this way Freud sought to explain both the degree of aggressiveness displayed by the soldiers in 1914, and the joy with which they entered the fray. War enthusiasm was equated rather simply with the assured preservation of life.

There was a potential problem in the view that civilization rested on the renunciation of instinctual satisfaction and that instincts possessed in most men an active and ineradicable power. Certainly the two ideas, if they both reflected reality, contained obvious seeds of conflict. Freud confronted the problem head-on: "we can only regard the present as disfigured by a gigantic hypocrisy."[14] "One might venture to say that our contemporary civilization is based on such hypocrisy, and that it would have to submit to far-reaching modifications if people were to undertake to live in accordance with the psychological truth."[15] It was clear that the level of civilization or, in Freud's terms, the extent of demands on instinctual renunciation, had been set at far too high a plateau for the average man to bear. As Russell too had noted, the heights of social morality characterized in Europe by Victorian England had created such a discrepancy between public demands and private

instinctual realities that an entire civilization had been forced to live "psychologically speaking beyond its means"[16] and had developed a deep-seated neurosis which was finding release in the present war. War had stripped the straight-jacket of social morality from the soldiers and allowed them "to permit themselves relief for awhile from the heavy pressure of civilization and to grant passing satisfaction to the instincts it holds in check."[17] It was Frued's conclusion that the violent enthusiasm of the times was a gigantic reaction to years of inhibition. As a phenomenon linked to real psychic factors war was something other than a mysterious aberration from the norm. It was testimony first to the continuing power of the unconscious and the aggressive nature of unconscious desires. And paradoxically, it showed also that repression had lost control over the unconscious, not because it had been too weak in its application, but because it had attempted to go too far in its demands for instinctual inhibition.

The results of Freud's arguments suggested even more far-reaching and distrubing implications. The morality of prewar Europe had demanded the inhibition of many basic drives but Freud returned always to the displacement of death from actuality in his discussion of European society's relation to war. He was vague on this point but he nevertheless took the last logical step in his long argument. If it were true that the demands of civilization had been too great and that men were further back along the path of psychological evolution than had been believed, them to make life endurable, meaningful and comfortable again, Freud suggested that the level of civilization be allowed to fall and that death be reinstated to its proper place in thought - whatever that meant specifically. He agreed that this might

be considered a regression, but he pointed to the fundamental need for psychic health. A cultural regression would diminish the pressures of hypocrisy and reflect more accurately the actual state of affairs as revealed by the war.[18] This is the point at which Freud's realism effectively merged with pessimism:

> Since we can only regard the highest civilization of the present as disfigured by a gigantic hypocrisy, it follows that we are organically unfit for it, we have to abdicate, and the Great Unknown, He or It, lurking behind Fate, will sometime repeat such an experiment with another race.[19]

This is surely the low point in Freud's evaluation of man and aggression and it illustrates the extent to which he was willing to accept the consequences of a scientifically-based argument. That his analysis should have led to the recommendation, however tentative, of a cultural regression, might have led some readers such as Bertrand Russell to question the bases of his entire argument, but then Freud's suggestion assumes the quality of an accurate forecast given the history of the western world since 1918. In his wartime articles Freud concentrated almost exclusively on the primary power of the id in the formulation of human nature, largely ignoring the potential role of the super-ego. Certainly by failing to consider the influence of specific environmental factors in the nature and occurrence of war, Freud was confining himself to an extremely rigid interpretation of events. He defended his approach by explaining that enough people were already expressing faith in the progress of man. What was needed now was a clear statement of man's "evil" nature upon which to base a more realistic understanding of his total personality.

The State as Greater Units of Mankind

Sigmund Freud's description of the relationship between the

state and the prevalence of war was a variation on his theme of individual psychology; the nation was the individual "writ large," although several stages back in the evolution of culture. To understand the actions of the state in wartime, one had first to understand the psychology of individuals, because for Freud individuals were society's defining constituents. He might have denied that psychoanalysis possessed a Weltanschauung of its own,[20] but in the sense that a relatively independent and consistent individual identity lay at the foundation of the state, psychoanalysis added a considerable tint to the proverbial couloured glasses. Freud's message was basically to "look inward." He therefore gave only secondary consideration to the role of particular social and political factors in the causation of war. They were at least one step removed from the critical springboard of action which was located in the unconscious. But the general character of society was crucial for, after all, the disasterous effects of the prewar value system had stimulated war and led Freud to the famous if "profoundly eccentric"[21] conclusion in "Thoughts for the Times" that a widespread cultural regression was advisable.

At one point, as a foil to the prevailing direction of his argument, Freud suggested that during wartime itself the amorality of the state contributed significantly to the brutalization of individuals, rather than the contrary. "It cannot be a matter for astonishment," he wrote, "that this relaxation of all moral ties between the greater units of mankind should have a seducing influence on the morality of individuals; for our conscience is not the inflexible judge that ethical teachers are wont to declare it, but in its origin is 'dread of the community' and nothing else."[22] But the state could

never be held to primary account for the war enthusiasm of the masses. Freud expressly downgraded the view that it was towards the iniquity of political elites that one should look for explanations to the conflict:

> And now we look away from individuals to the great war still devastating Europe: think of the collosal brutality, cruelty and mendacity which is now allowed to spread itself over the civilized world. Do you really believe that a handful of unprincipled place-hunters and corrupters of men would have succeeded in letting loose all this latent evil, if the millions of their followers were not also guilty? Will you venture even in these circumstances, to break a lance for the exclusion of evil from the mental constitution of humanity?[23]

In the search for an understanding to the war, the direction of enquiry was not to bureaucratic structures or political philosophy; the fundamental answers to questions of war and peace were not to be found in the aggregate.

Although the state was only one of the "various methods adopted by mankind for 'binding' their unsatisfied wishes,"[24] Freud described it as the primary agent in the subjection of the instincts. But the repression of the state was to a large degree necessary. If most men were restrained from malicious actions mainly by forces of reward and punishment, as well as by education and environment, then, in the long-run, the state actually increased their freedom in relation to threats from other men. Repression, the state, was a creative mechanism in this sense, a policeman exacting instinctual renunciation for the common good. How different a view this was from Russell's, which saw a need for state repression only when the social environment was structured in such a backward manner that aggressive instincts were stimulated along with creative ones.

That the state should perform a necessary task through repression

Freud greeted with relative equanimity. What shocked him was the evident hypocrisy of the state in this regard. The war had proved a "terrible opportunity"[25] for the individual to see that the state was repressing the practise of wrong-doing, "not because it desired to abolish it, but because it desired to monopolize it, like salt and tobacco."[26] The state had suppressed instinctual gratification only to incarnate it and Freud somehow showed less tolerance to its failings than he did to those of the individuals who comprised it:

> The warring state permits itself every such misdeed, every such act of violence, as would disgrace the individual man.... The state exacts the utmost degree of obedience and sacrifice from its citizens...but it absolves itself from the guarantees and contracts it had formed with other states, and makes unabashed confession of its rapacity and lust for power, which the private individual is then called upon to sanction in the name of patriotism.[27]

In comparison to the individual then, the question immediately arose as to what allowed "the destitution shown in moral relations externally by the states which in their interior relations pose as the guardians of accepted moral usage..."[28] In the context of World War I this was a very important question and Freud's simplest answer was that he did not know. All he could do was to conjecture.

His conjectures rested again on the principle that the state reflected the individual. "Having...come to understand our fellow citizens who are now so greatly alienated from us, we shall more easily endure the disillusionment which the nations, those greater units of the human race, have caused us, for we shall perceive that the demands we make upon them ought to be far more modest."[29] As individual behaviour stemmed firstly from the unconscious, so did collective behaviour. But in the latter case there was the noticable lack of an effective super-ego. There was no supra-national community which could

bring collective sanctions to bear on the individual trespasses of nations. "When the community has no rebuke to make, there is an end of all suppression of the baser passions, and men perpetrate deeds of cruelty, fraud, treachery and barbarity so incompatible with their civilization that one would have held them to be impossible."[30] It was just for such a super-ego in the form of a league of nations that Russell called at this time, and in his recognition of this need he was as aware as Freud of the super-ego's mediating role in the redirection of instinctual demands. But Freud was pessimistic that any such league would be voluntarily forthcoming. There was, in Freud's view, no a priori reason to support the thesis put forward in 1912 by Norman Angell that interests would rule the actions of states:

> True, we had hoped that the extensive community of interests established by commerce and production would constitute the germ of such a compulsion, but it would seem that nations still obey their immediate passions far more readily than their interests. Their interests serve them at most as rationalizations for their passions; they parade their interests as justifications for satisfying their passions.[31]

Freud did not even mention the states' (and Rolland's) exhibition of moralistic ideals in defense of their policies.

In line with his analogy to the individual, Freud posited only one explanation to the rapacity of the states: "Perhaps they are reproducing the course of individual evolution, and still today represent very primitive phases in the organization and formation of higher unities."[32] Freud intimated in one sentence here what he was to emphasize in Group Psychology. Like individual men, but with greater frequency, aggregates of people in the absence of greater sanctions clearly reflected the unconscious where "all individual moral acquirements are obliterated, and only the most primitive, the oldest, the

crudest mental activities are left."[33] In fact, because it was unrestrained by external forces, the state might be expected to act brutually and amorally, similarly to early man: "war is not to be abolished: so long as the conditions of existence among nations are so varied, and the repulsions between peoples so intense, there will be, there must be wars."[34] The prevalence of war could be explained then by the dynamics of group psychology, rather than only a reflection of over-repressed individuals. Where external controls had been too oppressive for the individual, they had not acted at all upon the group. The particular brutality of World War I was stimulated from two directions, both of which emerged from the faulty interplay of the super-ego with group or individual psychology. In reference to the state, Freud drew a parallel to the earlier evolution of individual man and suggested that "possibly only future stages in development will be able in any way to alter this regrettable state of affairs."[35] In the meantime, sounding somewhat like Bertrand Russell, he could only suggest as an amelioration of the violence, "a little more truthfulness and upright dealing on all sides."[36]

Courting Intellectuals

Freud hoped that a great deal of "truthfulness" might come about in one way by the conversion of the intellectuals to the theories of psychoanalysis. He admitted at the outset that, although warning voices had declared from time to time before 1914 that "as a result of long-prevailing differences wars were unavoidable, ...we refused to believe it."[37] Freud's criticism of the prewar intellectuals centred on what he described as the prevailing illusion that war, if it came, would be "an opportunity for demonstrating the progress of mankind... As a

chivalrous crusade, which would limit itself to establishing the superiority of one side in the contest, with the least possible infliction of dire sufferings..."[38] That illusion was now clearly shattered and Freud immediately took the opportunity to make a case for science over faith.

In "Thoughts for the Times" Freud devoted considerable space to the problems of intellectuals and war, concentrating his attention, unlike Russell and Rolland, on those thinkers who found themselves in the minority opposed to it. He subtitled the first section of his article "The Disillusionment of the War" which was directed to those civilized cosmopolitans who were now so disoriented, their "all-embracing patrimony disintegrated, the common estates of it laid in waste, the fellow citizens embroiled and debased!"[39] In contrast to his early enthusiasm Freud now clearly aligned himself with the disillusioned few:

> [The war] tramples in blind fury on all that comes in its way, as though there were to be no future and no goodwill among men after it has passed. It rends all bonds of fellowship between the contending peoples, and threatens to leave such a legacy of embitterment as will make any renewal of such bonds impossible for a long time to come.[40]

Why, asked Freud, had the intellectuals so much disillusionment to suffer? Because they assumed before 1914 that Europe had achieved a working supra-national identity, that the fatherland now stretched across the political borders of all the European states to encompass western civilization. The war denied these things but, as desirable as it might have been, Freud opposed the attempts of thinkers like Romain Rolland to insist upon the continuing validity of the illusion of unity. Indeed, he criticized the disillusionment even of those intellectuals who were now willing to face the "facts":

> Strictly speaking it is not justified, for it consists in the destruction of - an illusion! We welcome illusions because they spare us emotional distress, and enable us instead to indulge in gratification. We must not them complain if now and again they come into conflict with some portion of reality and are shattered against it.[41]

Freud simply refused to accept the continuing idealism of those intellectuals who asserted that, in spite of the contradictory evidence of the war, belief in the eventual realization of absolute values of peace and goodness must remain untarnished. To insist upon the retention of an illusion, as did Romain Rolland, appeared to Freud as an escapist manoeuvre, designed merely "to spare emotional distress." What Freud offered to them instead was a psychoanalytic explanation that, although a telling attack on faith in human progress, nevertheless accorded with an empirically-based, scientific theory. Following this line Freud was, in fact, mounting a major attack on the anti-war intellectuals. Implicit in both his allegation of their unjustified disillusionment and the fact that the intellectuals' prevalent worldview had to be "shattered" against reality, was the fundamental charge of irrelevance. Freud suggested that if war were a major shock to these men it was because they had lived together in a world of pleasant dreams, far removed from reality. In offering psychoanalysis as a vehicle to take them out of their demonstrated intellectual impotence, Freud was actually suggesting that they accept an entirely new context to their thought - realistic rather than idealistic, leading to a sounder understanding of the facts, rather than to recurring crises of despairing disillusionment. Although perhaps for the sake of his argument Freud identified himself with them, his attack on these intellectuals in "Thoughts" was major and inclusive.

Freud was apparently much less demanding of those thinkers who had gone over to the support of their governments in spite of pre-war declarations that if a major international conflict came, it would not be their war. He was relatively tolerant of them because he understood that these men were ruled firstly by their passions:

> ...we are mistaken in regarding our intelligence as an independent force and overlooking its dependence on the emotional life. Logical arguments are impotent against affective interests, and that is why reasons, which in Falstaff's phrase are "as plenty as blackberries," produce so few victories in the conflict with interests.[42]

Certainly Freud was "astonished" and "shocked" at the abdication of these men, "the narrow-mindedness shown by the best intellects, their obduracy, their inaccessibility to the most forceful arguments, their uncritical credulity for the most disputable assertions."[43] But psychoanalysis had confirmed the view of earlier students of human nature which forecast the "logical infatuations" that inevitably accompanied war. Because the actions of these intellectuals were, above all, understandable, Freud found little difficulty in coming to terms with them as "a secondary phenomenon, a consequence of emotional excitement, and ...destined, we may hope, to disappear with it."[44] For himself, Freud was conscious of the difficulty of interpreting great events with justice until time allowed a perspective. He regarded the nationalism of the intellectuals with a basic equanimity because it was "part of what the world is composed of." Certainly ethical judgements of their weakness appeared to Freud to be highly irrelevant. As in his benevolent attitude to the agressiveness of the masses, Freud accepted that of the pro-war intellectuals.

Sigmund Freud accepted the war and war enthusiasm because they were an understandable outgrowth of what he deemed to be the nature of

man as demonstrated by psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis was, after all, a science and science should not be expected to comfort ideals with a veil of illusions. In his concentration on the real world, on the "knowable," Freud was oriented almost entirely to the present. In his empirical evaluation of man he denied both the illusionary past to which Romain Rolland clung so desperately, and the revolutionary future in which Bertrand Russell saw so much potential. Freud viewed the war and its relationship to the nature of man with little hope, fear or illusion, descriptively, analytically, almost without comment. In attempting to maintain true scientific objectivity, he could have claimed to be "above the battle" far more justly than Rolland who, in his fervent opposition to the war became a leading partisan. Freud encountered the war in 1914 with far greater partisanship than either Rolland or Russell but, in the end, his discussion of the war was perhaps the most independent of emotion.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER III

[1] Ernest Jones, Sandor Ferenczi, Karl Abraham, Otto Rank, Hanns Sachs, Max Eitingon.

[2] Sigmund Freud, Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, trans. by Joan Riviere (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1920 (1915-1916), pp. 240-241.

[3] Sigmund Freud, "Letter to Frederick van Eeden" in The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, trans. and ed. by James Strachey, XIV (London: The Hogarth Press, 1957), 301.

[4] Sigmund Freud, Letters of Sigmund Freud, ed. by Ernst L. Freud; trans. by Tania and Jules Stern (New York: Basic Books, 1960), p. 311.

[5] Freud, Lectures, p. 123.

[6] Sigmund Freud, "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death" in Collected Papers, ed. by Ernest Jones, trans. by Joan Riviere, IV (London: The Hogarth Press, 1950), 300.

[7] Ibid., pp. 298-299.

[8] Ibid., p. 299.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., p. 297.

[11] Ibid., p. 312.

[12] Ibid., p. 314.

[13] Ibid., p. 306.

[14]Sigmund Freud quoted in G. Costigan, Sigmund Freud (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 195.

[15]Freud, "Thoughts," p. 300.

[16]Ibid., p. 299.

[17]Ibid., p. 300.

[18]Ibid., pp. 316-317.

[19]Freud quoted in Costigan, Sigmund Freud, p. 195.

[20]Freud, Lectures, p. 248.

[21]Philip Rieff, Freud, the Mind of the Maralist (New York: The Viking Press, 1959), p. 312.

[22]Freud, "Thoughts," p. 294.

[23]Freud, Lectures, p. 127.

[24]Sigmund Freud, "The Claims of Psychoanalysis to Scientific Interest" in Standard Edition, XIII, 186.

[25]Freud, "Thoughts," p. 298.

[26]Ibid., p. 293.

[27]Ibid., pp. 293-294.

[28]Ibid., p. 295.

[29]Ibid., p. 303.

[30]Ibid., p. 294.

[31] Ibid., pp. 301-302.

[32] Ibid., p. 303.

[33] Ibid., p. 304.

[34] Ibid., p. 316.

[35] Ibid., p. 304.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., pp. 291-292.

[38] Ibid., p. 292.

[39] Ibid., p. 294.

[40] Ibid., p. 293.

[41] Ibid., pp. 294-295.

[42] Ibid., pp. 302-303.

[43] Ibid., p. 302.

[44] Ibid., p. 303.

CHAPTER IV

ROMAIN ROLLAND

In the spring of 1919 Romain Rolland published a Declaration of the Independence of the Mind that strongly reaffirmed his faith in the dogma of "l'esprit libre." L'esprit libre is the most fitting description of Romain Rolland's wartime philosophy and, in fact, he later gave it as the title to a combined collection of his wartime articles. In one of them he clearly explained his concept of the "free spirit":

> Free from constraint, free from prejudice, free from every idol; free from every dogma whether of class caste or nation; free from every religion. A soul which has the courage and straightforwardness to look with its own eyes, to love with its own heart, to judge with its own reason; to be no shadow, but a man.[1]

Rolland's eloquent but idealistic description could have had political relevance only in a one-man world. It had almost no political relevance in World War I. Largely ignoring appeals to logic or reason, Rolland based his opposition to the war and his attacks of Europe's partisan intellectuals in a mystical emotional faith. In the end it was a singularly misdirected and ineffective means of furthering his ethical aims.

The Intellectuals: Morally Irretrievable

At the outbreak of war Rolland had expected the intellectuals of all of Europe to rise in unison against the conflict in protection of l'esprit libre. Instead he heard only "the clamour of herds."[2] He recognized immediately that the intellectuals had betrayed their

oft-repeated promises never to support a national war. In Rolland's view they had fallen by the way because they did not possess that elite sense of mission which was the only guarantee of purity against the compelling realities of the everyday world. Rolland could see no one but himself who had remained untainted:

> ...I believe myself to be almost alone in Europe. And I see the great weakness of these intelligent sincere men who consecrate their lives to their international socialism and who, at the first blow, deny it in thought and action: it is because they are not religious, they believe only by reason; and reason is insufficient to combat unreason... They know that they would be obeyed only by a minority, and they do not dare to prefer this little church pure and true, to the larger Church of compromise and combinazioni.[3]

Evidently among the very few who had taken their "consecration" to heart, Rolland described how he found himself alone "opposite from the world" and because the world was at war, how he had come without having wished it to "incarnate the cause of Europe."[4] With a deep sense of martyrship he noted that, in the midst of great upheaval, men of his sort were destined to be regarded as enemies of everyone simply because they chose to remain "above the battle," no one group's ally in principle. The world was aflood with moral sickness and Roland held it for his task to remain calm like Noah, to save from the deluge all those who swam searching for the Ark:

> Imperturbable, I behold the rising flood incarnadine,
> Which bears the beauteous body of mutilated Europe,
> And I hear the raging wind which stirs the souls of men.
>
> Though I stand alone, I shall be faithful to thee.
> I shall not take my place at the sacreligious communion of blood.
> I shall not eat my share of the Son of Man.
>
> I am brother to all, and I love you all,
> Men, ephemerals who rob yourselves of your one brief day.[5]

No issue was more rankling to Rolland during World War I than the betrayal of the intellectuals. It coloured his views on every other

question. For example, even in the Declaration that Rolland published at the end of the war, he included one last paragraph of bitter recrimination against all of his colleagues who had demonstrated support for their government during the conflict:

> Thinkers, artists, have added an incalculable quantity of envenomed hate to the plague which devours the flesh and the spirit of Europe... They have worked to destroy mutual understanding and mutual love among men. So doing they have disfigured, defiled debased, degraded Thought, of which they were the representatives. They have made it an instrument of their passions; and (unwittingly, perchance) they have made it a tool of the selfish interests of a political or social clique, of a state, a country, or class.[6]

Rolland spent several months before the publication of this Declaration attempting to gain signatures to the document of other prominent wartime resisters. But the evidence of his still wounded pride made some potential supporters reluctant to sign. George Bernard Shaw, for example, suggested that "a confession is more necessary than a reproach: without it we will have the air of being Pharisees, even snobs."[7] Shaw suggested that the betrayal of the intellectuals be viewed as a "detestible necessity" foisted upon them by the unpleasant but powerful realities of the war, now to be recognized and repented. An understanding attitude should be taken now that peace had restored the liberty of choice. Rolland was unimpressed with Shaw's arguments: "It is a text so curious that I must produce the entire copy here."[8]

Rolland replied more seriously to Bertrand Russell's criticisms. On May 4, 1919 Russell wrote to Rolland suggesting like Shaw that the time for denunciations was now passed:

> But with the war finished, it is comprehension, it is moral and intellectual unity, which are necessary to civilization... The essential task of intelligence is not to denounce, but to understand... The hates which underlaid the struggle have played their role. The hour has come for intellectual love, if one

> wishes to preserve what remains of the sciences and the arts, of civilized life, and of the hope of a world less brutal, freer, and more happy...[9]

It was strange that this remonstrance should have to be administered to the very individual who had demanded in 1914 that a nation must regard "even those against whom she is forced to fight as misguided brothers who must be pitied when they have been rendered harmless."[10] But for Rolland, even after the battle was done, the moral breach between himself and the intellectual betrayers was too wide to be forgiven. Faith, rather than understanding characterized Rolland's intellectual style. He replied to Russell that "they are only too ready to swear, like Cicero, that they have saved the fatherland. And what reason will these men, who will thus have received general absolution of their past errors, have to abstain from them again in the future?"[11] Rolland cautioned Russell to take care that in forgiving past sins, he did not in effect condone those of today - or tomorrow. In spite of Rolland's refusal to amend his Declaration Russell signed it. Also in "spite" of it, Shaw declined.

During the war Rolland attacked the intellectuals from several points of view beginning with a critique of their prewar record. In his opinion they had not been delinquent in inculcating basically worthwhile ideals into the young, but they had failed to show how these virtues could be realized without war. Patriotism and self-sacrifice were admirable qualities in themselves but they were now being utilized as the stuff of war. French youth had been groomed, but they had not been led:

> It is we who have planted these virtues in the hearts of these young heroes, who have prepared these victims... This heroic generation of 1914 were our young brothers, our disciples, our

> children. We formed them. But we did not have time to teach them the road. And we were unable to do it. Because this road, shall we confess it, we did not know it. We had waited indecisive until the last hour, at the crossroads.[12]

French intellectuals had glorified the Revolution of 1789 for its spirit of fraternity, and the fatherland for its liberty. They had stimulated an elan directed at the recovery of Alsace-Lorraine in the name of those ideals, and in opposition to the crude militarism of Prussia. But their efforts had been misdirected and counterproductive simply because they had led seemingly inevitably to this destructive war. By aligning spiritual values with the fatherland, the intellectuals had unwittingly tapped the faith and idealism of youth for mutual killing. But it was futile for Rolland to cry out in 1914 "it was not for you! It was not for your war!"[13] The issue after August 1914 became the conduct of the intellectuals during the war itself.

Rolland was willing to publish his Declaration in 1919 without any supporting signatures if necessary, rather than dilute in any way his last bitter attack on the "almost complete abdication of intelligence throughout the world":[14]

> What principally affects me in this human crisis is not the wickedness - it is the weakness - the weakness of character, the weakness of convictions, the weakness of perception and of thought.[15]

On August 3-4, 1914, Rolland confided in his Journal the most passionate grounds for his almost desperate opposition to the First World War. "The worst feeling is not only that there is no progress, but that there is a regression. In 1870, at least, an elite of men elevated themselves against the war... The striking fact this time is that the socialists of every country, without hesitation, have taken part in the war... It seems that all have brusquely abdicated their faith,

to espouse with more ardour that of their adversaries.... Singular faith, which bends at the first test! What! Not one amongst them who prefers to die for his cause than to die in the battle of nations!.... It is folly.... No great moral authority in Europe since the death of Tolstoy."[16]

Without the elite to what levels would Europe fall? Rolland was shaken at the prospect that now, with the intellectuals in fervent league with their governments, the work of mutual destruction would have no guards to break it. Indeed he saw that his traitorous colleagues might even take credit for the conflict itself:

> If there are any today for whom modesty is befitting, it is the intellectuals. The part they have played in this war had been abominable, unpardonable. Not only did they do nothing to lessen the lack of mutual understanding, to limit the spread of hatred; with rare exceptions they did everything in their power to disseminate hatred and to envenom it. To a considerable extent this war was their war. Thousands of brains were poisoned by their murderous ideologies. Overweeningly self-confident, proud, implacable, they sacrificed millions of young lives to the triumph of the phantoms of their imagination. History will not forget.[17]

If the intellectuals had simply failed to formulate ideals of brotherhood that were achievable without war before 1914, they were "criminals" now in their unrestrained devotion to national hate. The mask had fallen. Where Rolland had expected to see "the humane and affectionate faces of dear friends, there appeared the fangs and the foam of young wolves."[18] Even the churches were poepled by "pastors with arid souls keen-edged as a knife, immolating their flocks in the hopes of purifying them."[19] For Rolland, the intellectuals' failure to live up to their roles as observers was tragic not only for Europe, but for themselves. They had irrevocably compromised that independence which was the very presupposition of their identities. "They do not have the

courage to defend themselves one hour against the assault of reawakened bestiality. O how weak you are my friends!"[20]

Although Rolland initially played his role as Saviour with great energy, writing numerous journal articles and working with the International Red Cross, he did not evidently assume a position of public controversy with relish. "I did not choose my task. It imposed itself upon me."[21] Faced with the already unpopular task of leading a moral crusade against the war, Rolland's priggish and condescending style in addressing his peers was bound to reinforce the already unfriendly feelings engendered by his substantive position. In reference to his chilly reception in the German intellectual community (I am expecting an answer from your Hauptmann... Think about it...), Rolland, the great arbiter and judge was piqued:

> They did not understand that I offered them the chance of releasing Germany from the fetter of those crimes which its Empire was forging in its name... I heard only the clamour of herds, the pack of intellectuals giving tongue on the track whereon the hunter loosed them....[22]

His religious mysticism was bound to alienate other intellectuals who found his self-created similies to Jesus Christ insufferable. In 1917, Rolland compared his persecuted position to that of Jesus during the latter's lifetime and asked - did Christ give up, and did His thought die?[23] He suggested that other pacifists should remind their peoples about the failures that had led to war, but he did not accept this practically-oriented role for himself:

> My task is different, for it is to remind the hostile brethren of Europe not of their worst aspects but of their best, to recall to them reasons for hoping that there will one day be a wiser and more loving humanity.[24]

On the contrary Rolland's approach was not always that positive. In an unfortunate but accurate analogy he compared himself to the "soldier

who, following the chariot to the Capitol, reminds Ceasar in his hour of triumph that he is bald."[25] In fact, this is perhaps the most perspicacious description of Rolland's misdirected intellectual stance in World War I.

By June 1915, Rolland was forced by the sharp opposition that greeted his every word in both France and Germany to withdraw from his position as defender of the betrayed faith of peace. On one hand he felt impotent in the climate of war, a problem which he explained later in a letter to Jean-Richard Bloch:

> Those of your elders who, like me, have conserved their free thought, are like men with neither arms nor legs: they are unable to act; they have no one upon which to lean; they are not even able to speak. All platforms are closed to them. They are reduced to writing in obscure papers which are more often than not outlawed.[26]

But more than the frustration of external opposition, Rolland felt personally unsuited to what was necessarily a highly political role:

> I was timid of nature [before 1914] and I abhorred action; I preferred to hide myself from the rest of men...when I was a child to dream. And often I found myself necessarily thrown into the action and the struggle, more than any other writer! To the violation of my nature I experience only one pleasure, to suffer vanquished.[27]

Thus in July 1915, with distaste and rancour, Rolland ceased his writing and work with the Red Cross and withdrew from controversy. There was now "nothing to do but observe," for he was tired and wished to leave his work, "to see if I am able to forget, for a time, this folly and these fools, by retreating for several months into eternal art." Rolland had spent enough time in the world of passion and politics. "I have the right at present to return to mine." Morosely, he left Geneva for the countryside where he stayed until the autumn of 1916.[28]

Rolland's period of isolation served only to intensify his commitment to l'esprit libre:

> Free, free, free and sincere. That is my complete slogan. It is because I am a free and sincere man that I have spoken as I have done, refusing to place myself at the service of the group... I am the free brother of all free men... No program of action, other than being free and humane.[29]

With "no program of action" Rolland's much prized independence of the mind came rather easily. He begged his would-be followers to leave him free even from their devotion: "dear friends, it is not towards me that it is necessary to look, it is towards God who is there, on the horizon."[30] There were times, however, when even this differentiation was obscured. A year earlier, in 1914, Rolland had prefaced his Journal des Années de Guerre as "Notes and Documents to serve as a moral history of these times," and in the entry dated 5-7 August, he described his personal religious mission with a candour that shocks the contemporary reader for its egoism:

> My true personality is essentially religious; it is drawn in with God... A great convulsion like that of today attests to the redoubled forces of the divine vortex whose intoxication communicates itself to millions of beings. My spirit understands it. But my heart is unable to satisfy itself with this explanation. Such a god is an implacable force; and my heart is unable to admit the divinity of wrong and suffering, even to a transitory title... All evil is a negation of the divine, or an avowal of his impotence. If good is not an essential attribute of this implacable God such as I conceive him, if good exists in me and not in him, there is then in me a divinity superior to God himself. And I believe it. There is God the Father and there are the sons of God. The Sons of God are those of us who, emerging from the divine source are his flowers and his fruits. We are what he must be, what he must become, what he will be perhaps... The struggle that raises itself in me then is not between God and the world, but between God and God, between the Eternal force which is reflected in my spirit and the ideal of harmony which is inscribed in my heart ... And to succeed in making peace between these sovereign powers of the spirit and of the universe is properly the role of the Holy Spirit.[31]

Intolerantly and without hesitation Rolland envisioned the gap between

himself and the other intellectuals as an absolute division between good and evil, or between greater and lesser. Indeed, if there were any other "Sons of God" on earth, Rolland was quite unwilling to share the trusteeship of the divine estate with them. When it came to the creation of cooperative groups, Rolland balked at the diminution of his personal power and emphasized the need to be a "free and creative" individual. A truly independent spirit could never compromise itself by association with only similar points of view, or indeed by having too many vociferous disciples. It was necessary in Rolland's opinion that "Pontius Pilate" keep his hands pure in order to administer the medicine demanded by the times.[32]

In practice Rolland consistently refused to associate himself with groups in any European country working towards similar ends. In refusing any connection with the Bund Neues Vaterland, or the Comité de Rapprochement franco-allemand Rolland asserted his need for isolation in the fear that such associations would be misinterpreted in belligerant countries. The most interesting crisis in this vein occured in 1916 when Rolland was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. Even recognition from the Nobel committee was regarded by Rolland as a threat to his freedom - to the power of his martyred and solitary position above the battle. Recognition would, in effect, diminish the myth of his Olympian exile:

> I thought that the decision would be put off until the end of the war; irrespective of which I would have implored that they did not choose me, in the hope of guarding in tact the force of my solitary action. I still hope that the news will not be confirmed. I do not want anything for myself other than the right to think freely.[33]

Nothing on earth was to be allowed to call Rolland to account for either

his actions or ideas.

The Nature of Man: Fraternity Suppressed

Although few of his colleagues supported him, Rolland felt a transcendental sympathy with the "common man." Even in the midst of his most virulent attacks on Germany in 1914, Rolland was careful to draw a moral distinction between the people and their leaders. "I do not attach responsibility for the war to the people which is burdened with it and used as its blind instrument... War springs from the weakness of nations."[34] He was quick to absolve the fighting soldier from the criminal imcompetence of the "controlling classes, governments, financial oligarchies, churches, and the supposed intellectual elite - who have led the people to this inept killing."[35] He subsequently developed a powerful vocabulary in affirmation of the peoples' essential purity. His differentiation of the German people from Prussian leadership was clarified in "Our Neighbour the Enemy" (1915) where he repeated that "fraternal love persists below the surface of the nations, and soon nothing will prevent it from rising again."[36] In an unqualified denunciation of the intellectual elite he stated that "the European thought of tomorrow is with the Armies."[37] Rolland's campaign on behalf of the betrayed masses extended to the press and all those minorities that he saw forcing war on the peoples, "but our peoples I know, ask for peace and liberty and that alone."[38] They had allowed themselves to be led to a useless grave, but their fraternal desires were only temporarily gagged by the governments. "But the gag will fall and they will burst forth with explosive force."[39] Rolland finally came to see in the common experience of battle the strongest practical uniting force

among the European peoples. "Struggle and bite as they may, their very grapple binds them together."[40]

In spite of these faithful declarations, Rolland was in truth not unequivocal in his adulation of the common man. He expressed fear that the stultifying effects of ageless oppression might be extremely difficult to overcome:

> For their part they do not hate. They are the sacrifice; and those only hate who have ordered the sacrifice. Peoples poisoned by lies, by the press, by alcohol, and by harlots... Generous-hearted masses who must now unlearn the lesson of brotherly love. Masses deliberately demoralized, given over to corruption while still alive, slain... For centuries your reason has been bridled in passive obedience. Are you still capable of achieving freedom?[41]

His periodic impatience at the passivity of the people led to recurrent pleas that they arrive at some consciousness of their condition. This frustration was clearly basic to the entire revolutionary socialist movement in Europe, dealt with in a practical sense either through Lenin's concept of a highly organized and powerful vanguard, ready at the propitious moment to seize power in the name of the largely unconscious masses, or Rosa Luxemburg's democratic and educational ideal which rejected political action until the majority of the masses perceived their class interests and were willing to move together. But could either approach succeed in the midst of wartime propaganda, where only ideologues of the established order could indulge in the pursuit of their selfish aims while "the stupidity of the peoples, their fatalistic submissiveness, the mysticism that they have inherited from their primitive ancestors, leave them defenceless before the hurricane of lying and frenzy which drives them to mutual slaughter."[47] It became clear to Rolland that "herd mentality" was the bloc to progress, but again he reasserted that the devastating experience of the

war itself would bring about consciousness. In this sense alone could he agree that this was a war to end wars.

Although Rolland clearly idealized the nature of collective man, the strength of his recurring doubts should be emphasized. Fraternal love may have persisted below the surface, but the common man had obviously retained a highly developed capacity to rationalize his more undesireable drives by disguising them, albeit with the aid of the elites, in the form of idols. The "problem at which man has never ceased to labour throughout the centuries has been to harmonize his ideals with his own mediocrity. He has always succeeded. The crowd has no difficulty here."[43] In private correspondence Rolland wondered whether the majority would ever see the light and then concluded that the patrimony of culture would probably never reach them:

> I do not wait for the reign of God on earth, nor even a profound transformation of humanity. The reign of God has always been in the souls of a few on earth; hell in a small number of others; and purgatory in the great mass of men.[44]

In a particularly despairing moment near the end of the war, Rolland questioned the ability of most men to even carry the weight of intelligence, concluding with the near misanthropic statement that it didn't really matter for "man is not the last word in life."[45] Indeed at Christmas 1918, Rolland was forced by the hardened moods of popular conservative nationalism in both victorious and defeated countries to disavow his recently developed faith in the masses' ability to rise as the Phoenix of an internationalized civilization:

> What bothers me still more than the blindness of the leaders, is the apathy of the peoples. Four years of war have exhausted their poor capacity to suffer. They are desensitized. As in the times of Napoleon's victories, they sleep.[46]

In this mood, Rolland turned again to the establishment of an inter-

national intellectual elite, in the end a task perhaps more suited to his temperment. But this conclusion, and these moments of pessimism do not accurately reflect Rolland's prevailing view during the war, for in the midst of the conflict the masses appeared to be his only hope, and he made every effort to associate their character with his optimistic vision of the future.

Romain Rolland's intense moral crusade against the intellectuals was a direct consequence of his opinion that the majority of men depended upon an elite for their spiritual leadership. The organized churches had long since abandoned their once crucial role in articulating personal goals and values and Rolland placed the continuing responsiblity for this task on the shoulders of an intellectual elite of reasonable men, but men infused with a religious faith in the progress and basic goodness of mankind. Clearly then, when the West turned upon itself in war and caught the elites up with it, Rolland reacted with some sense of panic to the event. He neither forgave nor forgot the undeniable betrayal of the intellectuals, but he was unable to repudiate his own faith in the real progress of man. He therefore gathered the rejected patrimony of the European elites into his own being and progressively identified the cause of the "free spirit" with the masses who, although they had been led to a false crusade, were magnificant in their devotion to the cause. Stranded without the support of his fellow intellectuals, Rolland was coerced by his own indistinguishable faith in the progress of man to find another repository for the leadership of the human crusade on which the very survival of culture depended. In contact with Lenin's exiles in Switzerland, and taking comfort in socialist publications such as Milan's Avanti, he

subsequently discovered the only living alternative in the masses.

The foundation to Rolland's optimism was provided by his fundamental denial of the power of fatality in human affairs, except perhaps in rare times of monumental change. As did Bertrand Russell, and echoing Nietzsche, Rolland called for a conquest of the self wherein a better future was to be found:

> Again the venerable refrain is heard: "The fatality of the war is stronger than our wills." The old refrain of the herd that makes a god of its feebleness and bows down before him. Man has invented fate that he may make it responsible for the disorders of the universe, those disorders which it was his duty to regulate. There is no fatality! The only fatality is what we desire...[47]

Rolland was so strongly committed to the view that human trials were not necessarily linked to some unhappy pre-ordered destiny that he sought corroberation wherever a fact or theory might support him. His views on the nature of man were extentions of an already established philosophical worldview, arguments in search of proof and in this way analagous to, if less sophisticated than, those of Bertrand Russell.

Russell attributed much of the public's enthusiasm for war to "vast forces of national greed and national hatred" arising from aggressive elements of man's basic instincts. Rolland avoided dealing directly with the question of instincts in relation to man's propensity to war, and when he employed the term "instinct" at all it was usually only in a general sense. If he recognized a resurgence of cruelty and ferocity in individuals, he either failed to comment on it, or he supposed that it must be a carry-over from the recent Balkan crises. Forgetting his rejection of fatality, Rolland wondered whether some extraordinary factors were at the bottom of this aberration even if the search for explanations had to be expanded to include worldwide and

"cosmic" forces:

> The European Mêlée appears to me to be more and more of a cosmic crisis, a phenomenon of collective pathology, which has its roots in the mysterious laws of chemistry of peoples and their catastrophic mixing, perhaps even other than that in a sort of sickness of the planet or a crisis of conscience.[48]

> All is caught up in the universe, and the human organism, which is hypersensible, must submit, without knowing, to cosmic vibrations.[49]

Employing this naive terminology, Rolland discounted the rather evident quality of human actions that led Freud to such pessimism and Russell to such elaborations with blank assertions of faith:

> ...each one seems to have taken the form of the barbarous gods of the tribe. But modern man, man son of Christ, man descendent of the heroes of the spirit, is no longer satisfied with these fetishes. He has taken conscience of his universality.[50]

But Rolland was unable to ignore completely the pregnant implications of at least Darwin's theories when applied to war and he felt obliged on several occassions to comment on theories of instince per se, in particular reference to two European commentators on the subject - G.F. Nicolai and Auguste Forel.

Rolland devoted a rather long article to G.F. Nicolai in 1917 entitling it "A Great European" because of Nicolai's opposition to the war in Germany. Rolland concentrated his review on Nicolai's opinion's on instincts and aggression, not because he fully agreed with them, but characteristically because they were so optimistic, because of "Nicolai's faith in the future which influences us even more than the writer's ideas."[51] In terms of instincts, Nicolai claimed that the war was but a passing phase, and Rolland was quite willing to suspend his own critical judgement to publicize this claim.

Rolland associated himself quite closely with Nicolai's ideas:

> What precisely are the combative instincts?
> Are they essential attributes of the human species?
> In Nicolai's opinion they are nothing of the sort.
> He inclines, rather, to regard them as aberrations,
> for man was originally a pacific and social animal.
> His anatomical structure proves it.[52]

In Nicolai's view, war would soon disappear given the mysterious and exotic law of "giganthanasia." The disappearance of natural phenomena was invariably prefaced by their greatest development in size - the dinasour for example. Thus the very extent of the present war suggested its imminent natural demise - giganthanasia! War was like a mutation, something transitory that possessed little enduring significance and even less cause for alarm when considered in relation to that universal property connecting all of mankind - "germ plasm."

There would be no point in noting Nicolai's ideas if they did not reflect so effectively Rolland's established philosophical conclusions about the unity of man. Even if he sometimes lost faith in the conscious will of the masses, we have seen how Rolland never allowed himself to doubt that they were "pushed onward by blind forces, a bleating flock...towards the goal: Unity."[53] Rolland asserted hopefully that the theory of germ plasm confirmed in its own way that man was one giant organism moving on to greater heights of self-realization:

> It may be said that each one of us has within him a small portion of the living substance belonging to every one of the human beings that was living five hundred years ago. Consequently it is absurd that anyone should wish to restrict an individual, be he whom he may, within the separate category of nation of race.[54]

A dramatic mutation could occur in all minds at once and, in this case, because of the workings of giganthanasia, it would lead in a direction away from war. In essence, the combination of these two theories was

a fitting scientific abstract of Rolland's philosophical inclinations and, it would appear, equally exotic.

In a similar vein, Rolland published in 1918 an article about the biologist August Forel who described theories that emphasized the function of aggression in nature as "exaggerated." Forel's study of ants showed that "racial" differences that usually led to conflict could be overcome by socialization. Rolland was quick to draw appropriate conclusions:

> Such examples suffice to show how grave is the mistake of those who believe that instincts are quasi sacred, and who, after they have included the fighting instinct in this category, regard it as imposed by fate upon all living animals from the lowest to the highest... The war-making instinct is less ingrained, less primitive, than most people are apt to suppose ... If these humble insects are able to react against it, if they can modify their natures, if they can replace wars of conquest by peaceful cooperation,... should man avow himself more enslaved than they by his worst instincts, and less able than they to master these instincts?[55]

It was impossible for Rolland to reconcile his faith and idealism with a description of man drawn as brutally as that of Freud, or Darwin. Instead, in authors like Nicolai and Forel, Rolland found points of view that skirted the wall of fatality or destiny, and left man the freedom to decide his own future uninhibited by the limitations implied by some new branches of social science. Rolland repeatedly denied all but his own faith. In the article "Upwards Along the Winding Road" (1916) he expressed his belief in the inevitability of human progress by quoting Renan:

> Humanity's road is a mountain path, winding to and fro among the spurs, so that at times we fancy that we are going away from the summit. But we never cease to climb.[56]

As in his approach to the outbreak of the war, and to the reaction of the intellectuals, the scope of Rolland's views on man and aggression

was largely limited by an enduring intellectual absolutism that reduced his speculations to a limited number of basic propositions. And these were generally little more than sincere utterances of faith.

The State: A Rapacious Eagle

The political counterpart to Rolland's glorification of the masses was his evident conversion to revolutionary Marxism. In spite of its subsequently brutal development in Russia, he was still a solid supporter of Marxism even in the 1930's:

> What gives to the genius of Marx its principle value for us is the relentless lucidity with which it penetrated and laid bare the bourgeois ideology. He tore away from us the illusions in which we had allowed ourselves to be wrapped.[57]

Rolland arrived at this position at least midway through World War I as his views on the nature of the state became increasingly extreme. But his comments on the state were generally oblique and charged with emotion, lacking the analytic quality evident in both Russell and Freud. On questions of social structure and its relation to war Rolland was a follower, attaching himself to Tolstoy or to Lenin for ideological substance. Characteristically, what he felt he contributed to the revolution was the anchor of moral absolutes, a yardstick of perfection against which practical acts could be measured. Rolland was truly a "compagnon de route" in his social thinking; the only thing he really brought to the debate was the admonition in every case, to spare the Tsar.

Rolland's opinions about the state and its relation to war moved quickly in 1914 from relative moderation to overt hostility. On September 2 his condemnation was reserved:

> War springs from the weakness and stupidity of nations. One cannot feel resentment against them for it; one can only pity them.[58]

However, as early as September 15, Rolland's criticism had sharpened: "The rulers who are the criminal authors of these wars dare not accept responsibility for them. Each one by underhand means seeks to lay the blame at the door of his adversary."[59] By the end of September, the "state system" emerged as the very basis of war in Rolland's estimation:

> What is atrocious is the politics of states which throws them against each other, persuading them that they are mortal enemies, and that one is unable to live without crushing the other.[60]

At this early stage in the war, Rolland did not demonstrate significant analytical prowess in his political thought, referring to the evils of nation-states only in generalities:

> Who has brought these plagues upon [the people]? Brought them to the desperate alternative of overwhelming their adversaries or dying? None other than their governments, and above all, in my opinion, the three great culprits, the three rapacious eagles, the three empires, the tortuous policy of the house of Austria, the ravenous greed of Czarism, the brutality of Prussia.[61]

Finding descriptive tools only in obvious moral precepts, Rolland saw the great problem of the state as its greed, "the monster of a hundred heads, the monster named Imperialism, the will to pride and domination, which seeks to absorb all, to break all, or subdue all, and will suffer no greatness but itself."[62] The states were simply demonstrating the worst possible motives and Rolland's early response to the threat of "rapacious eagles" was nothing more than a fervent call to "the free men of all the countries of Europe...to take up the motto of Voltaire: Ecrasons l'infâme!"[63]

On November 26, 1914, only four months after the outbreak of war, Rolland recorded his conclusion that the ideals of the fatherland and of hymanity were, in the end, incompatible:

> Do not have any illusions... There is only one way, unique, to disengage one's self from this stormy atmosphere (which subdues you and me): it is to separate one's self from the idea of the fatherland. Whoever wishes the salvation of threatened human civilization will inevitably have to arrive at this terrible and necessary act.[64]

By Christmas 1914, Rolland had concluded that "of our two goddesses, Fatherland, Humanity, one has been completely devoured. And the other has been forgotten..."[65] No longer able to serve both the ideals of nation and of man, Rolland reached out to a position of complete independence, anarchism. But before he withdrew to seclusion in July 1915 his views and this decision were phrased repeatedly only in general Christian terms. "Everywhere there is a state," he wrote, "there is a betrayed ideal, adulterated, hypocritically mixed in with low interests."[66] Rolland was not yet speaking in the context of a conscious political ideology.

During the year from July 1915 to November 1916, while expressing his greatest pessimism about the nature of man and his relation to the state, Rolland developed an increasingly radical attitude towards the underlying meaning of the war. On the one hand this year of retreat might be termed his "Nietzsche Period," but on the other, it was also the period of his enthusiastic conversion to revolutionary Marxism. In the first place Rolland rebelled against the mediocrity of the masses and even against the theory of democracy:

> The aberration of the universal conscience that we see to such a degree at the heart of this war owes to democracy. Or at least to this democracy that we see realized. Of the herds.

> And they roar all together. In earlier civilizations they kept quiet. Change the system of government, there will be no less in them these blind and limited currents. The power of the press on them demonstrates that they do not have individual consciences. And more and more these blind currents will be master. Will anarchism be the counterpoint? Assuredly...we oppose the collective tyranny. We oppose it not only to the war, but to all blind movements of communal passion... Still more when this passion has murder for an end.[67]

Rolland's seclusion in the valleys of Switzerland was, to a large degree, a reaffirmation in his belief in an elite as well as a reflection of his view that there was no longer an elite in which to believe. It was a pessimistic year, not because Rolland lost faith in his ideals, but because they seemed to have so little chance of early realization. But at times if he appeared to be almost misanthropic, an underlying current of his wider faith was always present. In August 1915 he replied to a query from an American magazine that, although the war had confirmed his contempt for governments, it had bolstered his faith in the future union of all peoples within a more just and humane social system.[68]

In March 1916 Rolland revealed in a letter to Jean-Richard Bloch his "present conclusion that France and Germany (popular and official) are puppets"[69] of a small elite of industry chiefs, and by November he wrote an indictment of the existing state that assumed the "character of a declaration of complete rupture, no longer only with the war, but with the old society, with the capitalist and bourgeois order which was its basis."[70] He later dedicated a collection of articles written during this "new period" to the memory of the "martyrs of the new faith in the human international, to Jean Juarès, Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Gustav Landauer, the victims of bloodthirsty stupidity and murderous falsehood, the liberators of

the men who killed them."[71] In his essay "To the Murdered Peoples" (November 1916), Rolland admitted that no one could "wash his hands of the blood of butchered Europe,...but the shares in the guilt are unequal." Capitalists were not to be seen as the only scapegoats for the war but "honour to whom honour is due." From November 1916 Rolland publicly linked the existing state to capitalism and capitalism to war:

> In the loathsome stew which European politics constitutes today, money is the tidbit. Society is enchained, and the hand holding the chain is the hand of Plutus.[72]

"Plutus" represented the capitalists in whom "we see the climax of that anti-social egoism which is the curse of our day. They are merely the most typical figures in an epoch enslaved to money."[73] To Rolland the war had now become a question of social revolution because this war, although it might have been precipitated over matters of principle, had inevitably become a war of interests. "One understands," he wrote, "that the North American capitalists are little pressed to see the war finished."[74] Rolland had made a considerable about-face. After 1914, with the disintegration of his faith in a French-led crusade for Europe, the war offered little meaning; it was, for the most part, nothing but destructive. Consequently, Rolland withdrew to seclusion. But now he accepted it as a war to end all wars, as a vehicle for fundamental social change. The war could be justified after all by a revolution. If the peoples of Europe should "fail to take this course, if the war should not bring as its fruit the social renaissance of all nations, then farewell Europe, queen of thought, guide of mankind."[75] Rolland found himself after two years of increasing horror "without a hesitation...in the domain of action for social renewal - as well as moral, religious, esthetic - total!"[76]

Rolland greeted the March 1917 Revolution in Russia with enthusiasm: "Russian brothers your revolution has come to awaken this Europe of ours, drowsing over the whilom memories of revolutionaries. March onward! We will follow your footsteps."[77] Nor did he falter at the news of the October Revolution, this "wind of the north, charged with hope."[78] On December 6, 1917, Rolland made his position quite clear:

> The victory of the Russian Revolution appears to us to be capital to the future of Europe. It should exercise a fascinating effect on her. Without it, Europe risks tramping around indefinitely in sad quarrels and sterile tautologies.[79]

The Russian Revolution possessed the power to blow the decayed ideas of the hesitant bourgeoisie - and the parliamentary socialists - "to smithereens."[80] Lasting European peace and true liberty would finally be guaranteed by this fresh force blowing out from Russia. Rolland appeared at last to have overcome his hesitations and to be fully committed to a definite program of action.

It was an illusion. He wished for its success, but Rolland failed the revolutionary cause. The phantom of l'esprit libre reappeared to call him back to his perch of political irrelevance:

> I cannot be a Bolshevik, first because I am not a man of politics (sic) and less a man of party; second because violence horrifies me from wherever it comes, and I would not know how to accommodate myself to any despotism, red or white, or whatever colour it was.[81]

Rolland wanted to see dramatic action, to blow the past to "smithereens," but without violence. As he had asked France to flight with pity rather than ager at the opening of the war, so now he asked the struggling revolutionaries to succeed without bloodshed. They said that violence was an inevitable companion of revolution, but if that were so, Rolland

could not abide by it:

> All violence repels me, that of the revolutionaries as much as the capitalist and militarist imperialism... If the world is unable to exist without violence, my role, at least,...is not to make compact with it, but to represent another contrary principle which serves as a counterbalance. To each one his role... Let each one obey his own God![82]

Rolland attempted to play a political role in World War I while, at the same time denying that he had to assume a political stance. He was therefore repeatedly hamstrung over the contradiction between the need for action and the necessity of moral purity. He regarded himself as neither revolutionary nor anti-revolutionary - in spite of his pro-revolutionary pronouncements - but rather on some other plane of thought which "embraces past and future events together."[83] If he compromised by descending to the plane of action, he would be forced to adapt his language to avoid being misunderstood. But Rolland did descend to the plane of action, he did not adapt his language, and blatant contradictions and misunderstandings are exactly what occurred.

In reference to no other subject than that of the state does Romain Rolland's ineffectiveness during the First World War stand out so clearly. His views on the nature of the state and on the revolution are, in themselves, a bore. They are a bore because they are essentially the same as his views on the nature of man, the nature of war, the role of the intellectuals, and the transcendental nature of God. Rolland's mind was a fixed point around which the events of the times moved, either to be reflected in its image, or consigned to moral oblivion. The real world demanded accommodation. Rolland refused to comply. "I will never bend under the abuse of force," he

wrote, "and I place a moral wall between those who have recourse to it, and me."[84] In assuming the intellectual position he did in World War I, Rolland assured his impotence, both in the political and intellectual communities. Impotence was perhaps the result of his own declaration that he and other "finer spirits" of Europe were but guests in the City of Earth, and builders of the City of God.[85] There could be no compromise with political realities because a "great soul will never be able to be anything but independent and anarchistic, like Tolstoy."[86] But as Bertrand Russell remarked in 1915:

> Tolstoy does not judge conduct by its consequences: he considers actions right or wrong. But...we cannot expect such simplicity in our moral precepts, and we must expect all of them to be subject to exceptions. Whatever we have to say must be regarded as in the nature of practical maxims, to be applied with common sense, not as logically universal rules...[87]

Rolland attempted to defend himself against charges of impracticality and irrelevance by claiming a form of intellectual immunity, summed up by his admonition "to each...his own."[88] But one can clearly demand whether a man's judgment can rest only the dictates of his own conscience. Practicality should not be equated with relevancy, but in political situations the relation is surely close. Rolland's intellectual attitude during the war was fundamentally non-creative in its intolerant identification with absolutes. What came to be known as Rollandism" was based on a serious inconsistency perhaps best illuminated by John Lewis in his Case Against Pacifism:

> To exact pure ethics, and then to leave actual conduct without any ethical guidance, because in no situation can one do right absolutely, is not to be a Saint. It is to renounce morality all together. It is the abdication of man as a free personality, of man as a rational and moral being... It is to take refuge in the imaginary purity of non-participation in a wicked world.[89]

Romain Rolland had summed it up quite effectively himself: "No program of action other than being free and humane."

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

[1]Romain Rolland, The Forerunners, trans. by Eden and Cedar Paul (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1920), p. 42.

[2]Ibid., pp. 209-210.

[3]Rolland, Journal, p. 33.

[4]Ibid., p. 27.

[5]Rolland, Forerunners, p. 11.

[6]Ibid., pp. 209-210.

[7]Rolland, Journal, p. 1815.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid., p. 1818.

[10]Rolland, Battle, p. 101.

[11]Rolland, Journal, pp. 1819-1820.

[12]Romain Rolland, L'Esprit Libre (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1953), p. 17. All quotations from L'Esprit Libre are my translation.

[13]Ibid., p. 16.

[14]Rolland, Forerunners, p. 209.

[15]Rolland, Chère Sophia, p. 259.

[16]Rolland, Journal, p. 33.

[17]Rolland, Battle, p. 116.

[18]Rolland, L'Esprit Libre, p. 24.

[19]Rolland, Forerunners, p. 25.

[20]Rolland, L'Esprit Libre, p. 24.

[21]Rolland, Deux Hommes, p. 272.

[22]Rolland, Battle, p. 22.

[23]Rolland, Chère Sophia, p. 236.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Rolland, Battle, p. 21.

[26]Rolland, Deux Hommes, p. 379.

[27]Rolland, Chère Sophia, p. 236.

[28]Rolland, Journal, pp. 431-432.

[29]Romain Rolland quoted in P.J. Jouve, Romain Rolland Vivant (Paris: Libraire Paul Ollendorf, 1920), p. 67. My translation.

[30]Ibid., p. 255.

[31]Rolland, Journal, p. 35.

[32]Ibid., p. 970.

[33]Ibid.

[34]Rolland, Battle, p. 20.

[35]Rolland, Journal, p. 500.

[36]Rolland, Battle, p. 144.

[37]Ibid., p. 151.

[38]Ibid., p. 47.

[39]Ibid., p. 152.

[40]Rolland, Forerunners, p. 18.

[41]Ibid., p. 30.

[42]Ibid., p. 28.

[43]Rolland, Battle, p. 109.

[44]Rolland, Chère Sophia, p. 265.

[45]Ibid., p. 269.

[46]Ibid., p. 277.

[47]Rolland, Battle, p. 42.

[48]Rolland, Journal, p. 431.

[49]Rolland, Chère Sophia, p. 223.

[50]Rolland, Journal, p. 445.

[51]Rolland, Forerunners, p. 174.

[52]Ibid., p. 147.

[53]Ibid., p. 17.

[54]Ibid., p. 165.

[55]Ibid., p. 183.

[56]Ibid., p. 21.

[57]Romain Rolland, I Will Not Rest, trans. by K.S. Shelvanker (New York: Liverwright Publishing Corporation, n.d.), p. 62.

[58]Rolland, Battle, p. 20.

[59]Ibid., p. 42.

[60]Rolland, Chère Sophia, p. 213.

[61]Rolland, Battle, p. 50.

[62]Ibid., p. 50.

[63]Ibid., p. 51

[64]Rolland, Journal, p. 141.

[65]Rolland, L'Esprit Libre, p. 19.

[66]Rolland, Chère Sophia, p. 220.

[67]Rolland quoted in Jouve, Rolland Vivant, p. 116. My translation.

[68]Rolland, Journal, p. 500.

[69]Rolland, Deux Hommes, p. 346.

[70]Rolland, L'Esprit Libre, p. 46.

[71]Rolland, Forerunners.

[72]Ibid., pp. 25-27.

[73]Ibid., p. 28.

[74]Romain Rolland quoted in M. Kempf, Romain Rolland et Allemagne (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Debresse, 1962), p. 183. My translation.

[75]Rolland, Forerunners, p. 31

[76]Rolland quoted in Jouve, Rolland Vivant, p. 151. My translation.

[77]Rolland, Forerunners, pp. 39-40.

[78]Rolland, L'Esprit Libre, p. 46.

[79]Rolland, Journal, p. 1370.

[80]Rolland, Forerunners, p. 39.

[81]Rolland, Deux Hommes, p. 379.

[82]Rolland quoted in Jouve, Rolland Vivant, p. 152. My translation.

[83]Ibid., p. 151.

[84]Romain Rolland, Ces Jours Lointains, ed. by Marie Romain Rolland (Paris: Editions Albin Michel, 1962), p. 121. My translation.

[85]Rolland, Battle, p. 54.

[86]Rolland, Chère Sophia, p. 226.

[87]Russell, Justice, p. 39. Julien Benda refers to Rolland in this context in his 1927 essay The Great Betrayal: Mystic pacificism was "strikingly embodied in 1914 by a French writer who, having to judge between two fighting nations, one of which had attacked the other contrary to all its pledges while the other was only defending itself, could do nothing but intone, 'I have a horror of war,' and condemn them both equally. [sic] It is impossible to exaggerate the consequence of this behavior, which showed mankind that mystic pacifism, just like mystic militarism, may entirely obliterate the feeling of justice in those who are smitten by it."
Julien Benda, The Great Betrayal, trans. by Richard Aldington (London: Routledge, 1928), p. 149.

[88]Rolland, Deux Hommes, p. 278.

[89]John Lewis, The Case Against Pacifism (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1940), p. 58. In 1933 in his book I Will Not Rest Rolland admitted to inadequacy of his wartime stance. In fact, his self-criticism was strong and somewhat bitter: "But if I was right in condemning the intolerant narrowmindedness of those who were engaged in action, they would have been even more right in condeming the uselessness from the point of view of action of my vague and elastic formulas." p. 32. The intellectual "has no right, in the name of the spirit, to disdain material realities which are the basis of the first condition of the spirit. Even if it should please him, as an individual, to purchase his spiritual freedom by an aescetic renunciation from the great mass of his followers who are not able to find in their minds the same resources against the hardships of life." p. 202. "Mind and thought must mingle with the ranks." p. 12. "The sterile asceticism within which an elite of our own day likes to shut itself, the 'thought for thought's sake,' is already separated from the abyss but by a hair's breadth. That alone is alive which acts. Im Anfang war die Tat..." p. 205.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The Last Days of War

Russell, Freud and Rolland were subject to all the emotions inherent in war but as men who came to abhor it they suffered most from despair. For Russell the apparent futility of his efforts in the ever-deteriorating order of European civilization led him in 1916 to "a time of dangerous transition."[1] Writing in 1916 to Ottoline Morrell, he found himself on the "verge of utter cynicism":

> All that one has cared for is dead, at least for the present, and it is hard to believe that it well ever revive... And from the outer deadness the thoughts travel to the deadness in myself... The work I have done seems so little, so irrelevant to this world in which we find we are living.[2]

Freud too encountered despair. Restricted from travel by wartime regulations, caught in a time "fraught with poverty and isolation,"[3] without adequate food or heat, Freud wrote on Christmas Day 1918 to Karl Abraham, "the nightmare of the war has ended for you too."[4] Almost exactly a year before his growing fatigue with the war had grown to encompass even the effort of Austria:

> In the struggle between the Entente and the Quadruple Alliance, I have definitely adopted the viewpoint of Heine's Donna Bianca in the disputation at Toledo:
>
> But I rather suspect...[5]
> [That both the rabbi and the monk stink alike.]

After 1914 Freud became increasingly weary of the war. In August 1916 it was a "desolate world";[6] in August 1917 it was a "wretched" one.[7]

Freud must have looked back, not "half ashamedly" to the excitement of those first days of 1914, but with deep chagrin.

Romain Rolland traversed perhaps the greatest crisis of despair. In July 1915 his discouragement reached the point that he retired from active controversy. He has simply lost faith in the ability of the spirit to influence the course of the war or to survive in the midst of it. There was, for a time, no one to whom to turn. He found active hope again only in revolutionary socialism. But even then he was plagued with doubts that he overcame only as a matter of faith: "I have an intense pessimism, but an infinite hope."[8]

The armistice was a bitter triumph. Russell looked to the future with trepidation:

> One must compare the time with the barbarian invasion... For the next one thousand years people will look back to the time before 1914 as they did in the dark ages to the time before the Gauls sacked Rome.Queer animal man![9]

On November 11, 1918, Russell was back in Trafalgar Square:

> The crowd was frivolous still, and had learned nothing during the period of horror, except to snatch at pleasure more recklessly than before...[10]

He felt that his wartime activities had been largely futile:

> When the war was over, I saw that all I had done had been totally useless except to myself...I had acquired a new philosophy and a new youth. I had gotten rid of the don and the Puritan. I had learned an understanding of instinctual processes which I had not possessed before...[11]

Reflecting his absolute insistence on hope, Russell expressed in 1931 what he might well have thought in 1918: "It is my deliberate expectation that the worst is yet to come, but I do not on that account cease to believe..."[12]

By 1918 the Central Powers received no pity from Freud who had been so enthralled by their power four years before. As the

empires crumbled he asserted that he would "not weep a single tear for the fate of Austria and Germany."[13] Freud was aware of the fresh alternatives for peace in the League of Nations and the Russian Revolution but was sceptical about the likelihood of a true revolution in the condition of man. In 1933, at the same time that he exchanged regretful letters with Albert Einstein asking "Why War?", he could again find no substantial grounds for optimism:

> ...a fundamental alteration of the social order will have little hope of success until new discoveries are made that will increase our control over the forces of nature, and so make easier the satisfaction of our needs. ...But even so, we shall have to struggle for an indefinite length of time with the difficulties which the intractable nature of man puts in the way of every kind of social community.[14]

Again neither optimist nor pessimist, perhaps the only true intellectual.

Rolland too found little cause for joy, as he wrote to a friend at Christmas 1918:

> I don't know what your sentiments are, and whether the joy of victory dominates them. They are not then like mine. The outpouring of pride, of greed and violence is odious to me. It prepares us for an indefinite period of European strife... Four years of war have consumed the people's capacity to suffer. They are insensitized. As in the time of Napoleon's victories, the people sleep.[15]

The signing of the peace should have been a day of triumph, of hopes for the future, but Rolland saw the reality:

> The rumblings continue. -It is the signing of the peace.- The guns salute it with salvos of twenty barrels at one time. Sad peace! The derisory intermission between two massacres of peoples! But who thinks about tomorrow?[16]

While Germany stopped to sign the Treaty of Versailles, Rolland's Declaration announced: "We know nothing of peoples. We know the People, unique, universal..."[17] It was an echoless call.

Summary

Russell, Freud and Rolland have all been described by their various biographers as men of the Enlightenment. In a sense this description is fitting to each, but obviously in different senses. If Enlightenment implies scepticism and rationality, then one is tempted to credit Freud as the man most validly described. Freud viewed himself as a scientist. If the object of enquiry were man, Freud looked to man for the data upon which to base an hypothesis, discarding what should be, or even what might be, for the sake of reality. The immediate result of his enquiry during World War I indicated that men were not as culturally advanced as had been supposed, that they had "never risen so high as we believed." Although that fact might have been a shock to one's hopes and desires, one had no other alternative than acceptance of consequences the use of reason demanded. But surely Freud lacked balance in his refusal to credit the influence of specific environmental factors on human actions. During the war Freud largely ignored the role of population changes, economic transformations, communications and propaganda. He noted quite clearly the general relationship of European society to the unconscious but, in the end, it was the sole power of the id that drove Freud to conclude that the war was a justifiable balancing of the psychic budget indicating a need for cultural regression.

Russell's approach to the nature of man was generally more balanced. He recognized at the outset that there were two categories of explanation to human aggression - innate human drives, and environmental factors. He expanded on both but, as has been shown, he compromised the definition of instincts to the point at which it lost

the bulk of its meaning. Russell emphasized the active power of thought and imagined that the majority of men would excercise it to their improvement if only shown the way. The nature of man became any possibility dependent upon powerful but modifiable environmental factors.

Romain Rolland made reason and human brotherhood mystic and religious goals and then mystically and religiously applied them to the unconscious masses. At least in his public observations, the masses appeared to be the imminently realized ideal, hiding or hidden beneath an acquired mantle of apathy. If the nature of man were implicated in war, it was credulity and faith, faults of ommision that were responsible. The generous but naive masses were only the dupes of a prideful and shrewd elite capable of cajoling them into doing their bidding. War had very little to do with the true identity of the people and, if the truth were known, was in conflict with their actual desires. War was an unspeakable tragedy for Rolland because it conformed to <u>such a small degree</u> to the true nature of man.

Resigned acceptance characterized Freud's reaction to the soldiers' rush to the front; acceptance also characterized Russell, but it was an angrier reconciliation and he refused to extend it to the future; and Rolland, in spite of moments of pessimism, refused to accept it at all.

Other than the nature of man, the betrayal of the intellectuals was of major concern to Russell, Freud and Rolland. Freud and Russell attempted to avoid moral evaluations of the problem; Rolland saw it as nothing but a moral problem. Freud was shocked at the abdication of intelligence but unlike Russell and Rolland he viewed

it as a predictably regrettable and temporary phenomenon. Russell and Rolland directed their concern almost exclusively to those who had rejected their prewar internationalism in support of their respective governments; it was the about-face of the majority that appeared to them to be of the greatest significance. Freud took the opposite view. What was more interesting to him was that small band of thinkers who refused to abandon their faith...the disillusioned few. Freud was particularly concerned with these men because he felt that psychoanalytic theory might provide an attractive new foundation upon which to build their worldviews. Nothing could be done about the betrayers, but those opposed to the war, who were suffering a lethal attack of their ideas might well be won over to Freud's movement. On the one hand he ridiculed their attempts to maintain a prewar faith while on the other he offered the balm of psychoanalysis as an escape from their intellectual impotence.

Russell and Rolland were engrossed in the immediate threat to the present. There had been unpardonable inadequacies before the war in the actions of the intellectuals, but that they should immerse themselves in the tragic consequences of their own pre-war failures was inconceivable. The crime was the descent of the protectors of absolute values into the arena of barbarism; the victim was European civilization. Russell and Rolland were as concerned as Freud for the fragility of reason, but they differentiated the intellectuals from the rest of society as the guarantors of restraint, thus their comparatively greater concern. Neither Russell nor Rolland suggested that the detachment of the intellectuals should be inactive or indeed unemotional. They asked only that the object of concern be the

crucial and significant one - opposition to the war. As Russell wrote in 1917: "critical detachment is hardly my attitude to the war. My attitude is one of intense and passionate protest..."[18] Freud had demonstrated tolerance for the intellectuals because he recognized the inherent weakness of "independent" thought among all men; Russell demanded that the intellectuals turn to social revolution with the power of thought as the only necessary force; and Rolland refused to consider an armistice with those who had betrayed the sacred inviobility of thought even after the war was finished.

Why war 1914-1918? There are two approaches to the answer. One of them denies that World War I was anything more than a diplomatic accident, explicable in terms of nervous politicians, overly intricate power alliances, and railway schedules. A.J.P. Taylor for one takes this view:

> Man are reluctant to believe that great events have small causes. Therefore once the Great War started, they were convinced that it must be the outcome of profound causes. It is hard to discover these when we look at the details.[19]

In most histories of the period, A.J.P. Taylor's approach is the dominant one. Explanations of World War I are generally descriptive of power politics gone awry.

There is, however, another dimension to the problem of the First World War that is usually ignored. It assumes, in contrast to Taylor, that this most destructive war must have grown out of deep underlying currents in European society. Russell, Freud and Rolland stand out as among the few men who saw the war in this light between 1914 and 1918. Without discounting specific points of their respective analyses, one can isolate a similar and fundamental theme running through each of their works during this period. That is, that

this war was a people's war as much as it was a war of the diplomats, and that the people were fighting it as a result of serious flaws in the social status quo. Russell stated this explicitly in August 1914 when he became aware of the public enthusiasm for the war in Trafalgar Square, against which he felt the government could not even have stood. Freud did not view the war as anything but a people's war in the sense that it emanated from individual psychology and implied in the long-run that the actions of governments were largely reflections of the people's desires. Russell and Freud were in basic agreement that the motivation for this war was shared by almost everyone. Romain Rolland's position was characteristically more complex. He could not deny that the people were prowar but he held the political and intellectual elites responsible. But as the war progressed Rolland discounted the elites and reinterpreted the conflict as a struggle on behalf of the masses. In a positive sense the war would be transformed from a war of minorities to a people's war for international socialism. If, by 1916, he could not deny that this war extended to everyone, Rolland insisted at least that it resulted in the renaissance of Europe.

An explanation to World War I poses an extremely complex challenge. Russell, Freud and Rolland should be recognized as three of the few men who looked to other than traditional political causes for insights into the West's most destructive internecine conflict.

FOOTNOTES FOR CONCLUSION

[1]Russell, Autobiography, II, 21.

[2]Ibid., p. 74.

[3]Sigmund Freud quoted in L. Biswanger, Sigmund Freud: Reminiscences of a Friendship (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1957), p. 64.

[4]Sigmund Freud, A Psychoanalytic Dialogue, p. 283.

[5]Ibid., p. 264.

[6]Ibid., p. 239.

[7]Ibid., p. 255.

[8]Rolland quoted in Jouve, Rolland Vivant, p. 304. My translation.

[9]Russell, Autobiography, II, 115.

[10]Ibid., p. 35.

[11]Ibid., p. 38.

[12]Russell, Portraits, p. 113.

[13]Sigmund Freud quoted in G. Costigan, Sigmund Freud, p. 203.

[14]Sigmund Freud, New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, trans. and ed. by James Strachey (New York: W.W. Norton and Co. Ltd., 1933), p. 248.

[15]Rolland, Chère Sophia, p. 277.

[16]Rolland, Journal, p. 1832.

[17]Rolland, Forerunners, p. 210.

[18]Russell, Autobiography, II, 102.

[19]A.J.P. Taylor, An Illustrated History of the First World War (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1963), p. 13.

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